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SUMMER 2004

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THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

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THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

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BING magazine:	http.//members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html
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(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor and / or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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EDITORIAL

It has been my pleasure to work with the rest of the staff of this organization on the past three issues of this magazine. The merger has gone exceptionally well, with hardly any glitches, and BING has become a truly *international* publication. I said in the first editorial that I wrote for this magazine that I would be the American Co-Editor for a limited time (approximately one year). Since I will be 75 years old next year, and our goals for the merger of the Crosby clubs have been achieved, I believe it's time for me to retire and leave this work to the younger generation.

It seems that I have been "retiring" from one job or another all my life. I have been a printer, soldier, teacher, librarian, church secretary, and magazine editor. What is there left for me to be? I don't think I want to explore other possibilities. However, I don't plan to sit down and vegetate. I have several Crosby projects in mind, including some articles for BING. My interest in Bing Crosby will never diminish. I will always want to watch his movies, listen to his records, watch his TV shows, and listen to his radio shows. We are indeed fortunate that Bing's lifetime work is so readily available from so many different sources. I also want time to do my crossword puzzles, watch my grandchildren grow up, and have more time for my dear wife Sandy, to whom I have been married for 30 years.

And now here is some good news. The new American Co-Editor has been appointed and has accepted the job. He needs no introduction, as all of you know him from his past services. Our new editor is **Greg Van Beek**, who joined the Crosby clubs when he was a teenager and has written many articles for both BINGANG and BING. Greg will also be the archivist for the American Crosby Archives (when I finally get them all together and shipped to him). He already has enough materials of his own to form a good-sized archive. Greg has some excellent contacts, lots of energy, and a deep devotion to Bing Crosby and his work. You may reach him at the address given on page 2.

My best to all of you, my friends, and may Bing's spirit live forever in our hearts!

Wayne L. Martin

And our best to you too, Wayne, with our grateful thanks for all you have done for Crosbyana over the years. Wayne carried a huge load in his role as Editor of BINGANG for so long and we all owe him a tremendous debt. But he will not be lost to us and already we have another article from him in the pages of this issue. I look forward to working with Greg Van Beek.

With Bing's centenary celebrations virtually over, we are now entering a difficult period and there is a very real danger of Bing's image fading unless we work hard at perpetuating it. Pete Cakanic describes what he has done in this regard later in this issue and Judy Schmid gives details of how we can help protect Bing's legacy for future generations. It's up to us all to do our bit - it's

no good moaning about it later. We hope the Crosby family will be more active in the future too. Certainly it is in their financial interests to do so if nothing else.

There is news of more DVD and CD releases which is encouraging. Kathryn Crosby has continued to talk about her life with Bing in various parts of the USA and she has also recorded her two books on to CD.

Despite early problems, we did manage to have a superb Crosby get-together in Dublin in May — Jane Fitzgerald has the full story. The annual Leeds meeting in the UK will be on October 3 this year in a new location: please see Michael Crampton's section for further details.

As always, we have a wide variety of articles for your enjoyment in this issue. Our contributors do a great job and it is a real pleasure to receive their submissions. Ron Bosley makes my job so much easier by being able to supply appropriate photographs to go alongside the written word. My thanks to all who support us.

Our front and back covers this time are both recent purchases through eBay and I am grateful to Jon Oye for helping to brighten up and improve the image used on the front cover.

Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

One of the privileges of being Secretary of the International Club Crosby is that I am in contact with members old and new, many of whom have spent a lifetime admiring and appreciating Bing Crosby's vocal art and talent. Sadly in this issue, we say goodbye to a founding member of The British Bing Club, **Art Allen** and to several other long-term stalwarts who gave much, if not all of their spare time to celebrating Crosbyana. Our loss is mitigated slightly as founding members of Club Crosby join us from Australia and around the world. Welcome to all new members and may your association with the club enrich you.

The Grand Hotel Malahide in Dublin was the scene of our 2004 celebration of Bing's centenary. The event brought together Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra followers and we are grateful to George O'Reilly, Derek Perkins and Frank Brannigan for their support at this event. Chris Hitchcock, an ICC member and Frank Sinatra aficionado along with Derek Perkins encouraged Sinatra Music Society members to come along and we were grateful for their enthusiastic support. Bing sounded and looked good in the new state of the art theatre where we got to view his "Little Bit of Irish" scenes and other rare material provided by our Editor on DVD. Thanks are due to Malcolm who ultimately made this event happen. Sue Horn, Jane Fitzgerald and her friend Mary were special guests from the USA and you can read Jane's report later in this issue.

NEW MEMBERS

Bing Crosby won the heart of so many people down the years that it may never be possible to establish just how many appreciated his wonderful musical genius. Happily, some of these good people join us for the first time in this issue of BING and we are delighted to welcome them to membership of the International Club Crosby. Members of **Club Crosby** who were also members of the former International Crosby Circle will be welcomed in future issues of our journal.

Our thanks go out to Wig & Laura Wiggins and David Currington for their diligent efforts to recruit new members.

United States and Canada

Roger Dillon (East Alton, Illinois), Ronald Tryka (South Holland, Illinois), Dave O'Dell (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada), John Jensen (Federal Way, Washington), Jim Lowe (New York, New York), Charles Townsend (Canyon, Texas), John Newton (Wilmington, Delaware), Herb Lane (Cliffside Park, New Jersey), Maureen Stewart (Brooklyn, New York), L.J. Brayard (La Miranda, California), James McDowell (Indianapolis, Indiana), Robert Gardner (Bothell, Washington), David Hendrickson (Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin), Karen Hay (Vancouver, Washington), Stephen Mathys (Eugene, Oregon), Donald Gurda (Greendale, Wisconsin), Annette Silvey (Nice, California), Kathy Brown (Columbus, Ohio), Marie Grandstaff (Surprise, Arizona), Joseph Amodei (Hulmeville, Pennsylvania), Rhonda Way (Strasburg, Virginia), James Clifford (Horrell, New York), Patricia Kenny (New York, New York), Ralph Bannigan (Kansas City, Missouri), B.D. Linblad (Beesley's Point, New Jersey) Sharon Briscoe, (Port Arthur, Texas), Finn Tellefsen (West Palm Beach, Florida), Jean-Guy Levasseur (Mont St. Hilaire, Quebec, Canada), Stephen Koumos (Malverne, New York), Jay Lineberry (Greensboro, North Carolina).

Australia and New Zealand.

Maria Ermacora (Preston, Victoria), Shirley M. Naylor (Orange, New South Wales), Peter Green (Queenstown, Tasmania), Syd Catford (Appila, South Australia).

England

Cliff Simmonds (Hayworth, West Yorkshire), Tom Preston (Gillingham, Kent), Mr S. W. Herrett, (Godalming, Surrey), John R. Walton, (Langworth, Lincoln), Barry Hollowday (Littlehampton, West Sussex), Sarah Kennedy (BBC Radio 2), Alan Mills (Walsall, West Midlands), John Whitehead (Hornchurch, Essex), Jack Leonard (Wells, Somerset).

DEATHS

With great sadness, I have to record the passing of the following members.

Sam Fleshman, (Eugene, Oregon, USA), Art Allen (Wainfleet St. Mary, Lincolnshire), Colin Pugh

(Bristol), Percy Keepin (Maidstone, Kent), Alf Peyton (Watford, Herts.), Robert Taylor (Runcorn, Cheshire), Ken Hill (Luton, Beds.), Mr W. T. Anning (Long Eaton, Nottinghamshire), Frank Kelly (South Benfleet, Essex), John Brown (Spilsby, Lincolnshire), Walter Evan Davies (Godalming, Surrey).

The names of **Sam Fleshman, Colin Pugh, Percy Keepin,** and **Art Allen** in particular were synonymous with Crosbyana for many years as was their dedication and enthusiastic support for all the Bing clubs with which they were associated. **Colin Pugh** played a very important part in our club contributing many articles as well as his excellent book *Alternate Bing Crosby*. **Percy Keepin** was an enthusiastic visitor to our Leeds meetings and a long-term contributor to Tape Crosby.

We extend our sincere condolences to the family and friends of all those we have lost.

CALENDAR 2005

Ron Bosley has kindly agreed to prepare the 2005 calendar for us. We hope to have it available at the Leeds meeting.

LEEDS 2004

For the first time since 1975, the Leeds Meeting/Dinner will not be held at the Mansion Hotel, Roundhay Park Leeds. Leeds City Council, who own the Mansion Hotel, have received money from the Lottery Fund and the Hotel is being refurbished and its usage may be changed for future years.

Happily, we are to move to a new location on October 3, which will suit our needs, and I am sure that members will be delighted with the new facilities. The grounds are splendid and the room in which we will hold our meeting has first class projection/audio features. The restaurant is also first class as are the 106 bedrooms. Overnight rates for the weekend seem very reasonable.

A coloured map will be sent to all who attend along with details of the other local hotels.

Our new venue, which is owned by the University of Leeds, is:

Weetwood Hall, Conference Centre & Hotel
Otley Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS16 5PS
Telephone: 0113 230 6000
Website: www.weetwood.co.uk

Dinner (Choice of four items per course) is £19 with coffee/tea on arrival of £1.80. Please send a cheque for £20.80 to Michael Crampton to book your place.

We look forward to your support and company and to your views on what we should feature at this eagerly anticipated event.

****

Until Leeds or until December, if you are not attending our 39th meeting , may I extend my sincere best wishes to all club members.

Michael Crampton

THE CROSBY YEARS

Gord Atkinson remembers the Crosby Boys.

In the summer of 1960, three of Bing's sons from his first family toured North America as a polished vocal trio. Ottawa fortunately was on their itinerary which gave me the opportunity to interview and socialize with them during their engagement. Although it was our first meeting, Phillip, Dennis and Lindsay greeted me like an old acquaintance. Their easy, friendly manner had me feeling like I was talking to three pals I hadn't seen for some time. Their oldest brother, Gary, who briefly was part of the act, had gone solo by that time to pursue a career in acting. Rumour had it that he and his brothers were not as harmonious off stage as they were when performing. You may recall, Phillip's angry reaction to Gary's book and negative comments about their dad, which revealed a sibling rift and a strong difference of opinion.

However, in the 1940s and '50s they were frequently photographed as the seemingly close-knit children of one of the world's most famous families. People tended to think of them and their parents as one thinks of close relatives.

When Phillip, Dennis and Lindsay made their entrance on the stage of a popular Ottawa supper club, the audiences greeted them with all the warmth of a family gathering. Here is a quote from my July 23, 1960 newspaper review of their performance:

"A capacity house applauded loudly their slick and very entertaining act. The boys have a solid presentation, featuring ballads, swing tunes, folk songs, comedy patter and a remarkable medley of several of their father's hit records."

Gord with the Crosby Boys in 1960.

After their opening night show, we talked into the early hours of the morning about their family life as boys. They recalled their memorable visits to their dad's radio and television programs, the wartime camp shows, visiting Paramount movie sets and their summers working like hired hands at the Crosby ranch near Elko, Nevada.

Phillip told me about one incident that was a fond

memory. When the "best actor" nominations for the 1944 Academy Awards were announced, he made a clay replica of an Oscar for his father. Bing was so pleased with his son's loving gesture that he had it bronzed and kept it in a special place.

Our conversation was laced with humour. Phillip teased his twin brother, Dennis, by calling him "Bing", the inference being that he was most like their father. Dennis and his younger brother, Lindsay, were amiable and warm but less outgoing than Phillip, who was easy-going and full of fun.

A few weeks after their Ottawa engagement the night club where they were headliners, mysteriously burned to the ground. When Bing heard about the conflagration, he said to me on the phone, "I always knew those boys were too hot to handle." Several days earlier I had received a thoughtful letter from him which appears on the inside back cover of this issue of BING.

The recent loss of Phillip and the passing of Gary, both from natural causes, and the tragic deaths of Dennis and Lindsay, have left us with mixed emotions of sadness and nostalgia. Our fond memories of four special boys and their famous father, take us back to an earlier and gentler time, when life was mellow and the world was young.

During my 14-part musical documentary, "The Crosby Years", Bing's four late sons are featured on our special 2-part "Crosby Christmas". Gary Crosby's insightful and positive reminiscences about his dad (from our 1974 interview) are heard throughout the series.

All programs from "The Crosby Years" will remain available for a limited time. If you don't have copies of the Christmas CDs, I would respectfully suggest that you place an order for next Yuletide while they are still available. If you have not heard any of the CDs, I would recommend the "Prologue" and "Epilogue" as appropriate introductions to the series.

Our good friend and supporter, Malcolm Macfarlane has all the details below.

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: US and Canadian members can obtain the CDs from "The Crosby Years", Anderson Publishing, 102 Boyce Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K2H 6J2, Canada. [Phone (613) 721-0811]. Payment can be made by check, Visa or MasterCard. The secure e-mail address for orders is admin@anderpub.com . The cost is $24.00 US for 2 CDs and $13.00 for one CD which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $30.00 for 2 CDs and CAN $16.00 for one CD. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks to Anderson Publishing.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £15.99 for two, £8.99 for one.)

Seasons

Many of you are waiting for the *Seasons* album to be issued on CD and sadly there are continuing delays with this. However, it was nice to see the title track on the recent CD release *Forever Bing* and a query was raised on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum about the two recording dates quoted for this song. Reference was made to Ken Barnes himself who stated:

> "The story about there being two versions of 'Seasons' is only partially true. The orchestral backing was recorded in London in July, 1976 and Bing recorded the vocal in Los Angeles in October of that year. The following year - when he recorded the main sessions for the *Seasons* album in London - I had made some changes to the lyric to 'Seasons' which Bing liked and he simply re-recorded two lines "The sylvan splendour of each day reveals a simple truth. Tho' life is good along the way, we've said goodbye to youth." The rest of it remained unchanged from 1976 in Los Angeles."

Fascinating to know the detail of this. Ken Barnes does, of course, continue to provide great support to the Crosby cause and please see *Keeping Track* for details of an exciting new 3-CD release he has produced for the Shout! label.

THE TOP MOVIE SONGS?

In BING #135 (page 8), we gave details of the American Film Institute's ballot for the best 100 songs in US cinema and the results were announced through a TV special on June 22. Here's an extract from the press release.

"LOS ANGELES, June 22 /PRNewswire/ — The American Film Institute (AFI) revealed the top movie songs of all time in AFI's *100 Years ... 100 Songs* three-hour special television event hosted by John Travolta. Having contributed to the list himself — his dance moves helped *Saturday Night Fever's* 'Stayin' Alive' disco its way into a Top 10 spot and he made his own way onto the final list with his performance of *Grease's* 'Summer Nights' — Travolta was a natural representative for 100 years of American movie music.

In the venerated #1 spot was Judy Garland's soulful and iconic rendition of 'Over the Rainbow' from the beloved family classic, THE WIZARD OF OZ. Nabbing the rest of the top spots were classics of every kind-from timeless favorites of yesteryear to contemporary tunes-including As Time Goes By (CASABLANCA), Singin' In The Rain (SINGIN' IN THE RAIN), Moon River (BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S), White Christmas (HOLIDAY INN/WHITE CHRISTMAS), Mrs. Robinson (THE GRADUATE), When You Wish Upon a Star (PINOCCHIO), The Way We Were (THE WAY WE WERE), Stayin' Alive (SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER) and The Sound of Music (THE SOUND OF MUSIC)."

#	SONG	MOVIE	YEAR
1	Over the Rainbow	WIZARD OF OZ, THE	1939
2	As Time Goes By	CASABLANCA	1942
3	Singin' in the Rain	SINGIN' IN THE RAIN	1952
4	Moon River	BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S	1961
5	**White Christmas**	**HOLIDAY INN**	**1942**
6	Mrs. Robinson	GRADUATE, THE	1967
7	When You Wish Upon A Star	PINOCCHIO	1940
8	Way We Were, The	THE WAY WE WERE	1973

9 Stayin' Alive	SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER	1977
10 Sound of Music, The	SOUND OF MUSIC, THE	1965
11 Man That Got Away, The	STAR IS BORN, A	1954
12 Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend	GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES	1953
13 People	FUNNY GIRL	1968
14 My Heart Will Go On	TITANIC	1997
15 Cheek to Cheek	TOP HAT	1935
16 Evergreen	STAR IS BORN, A	1976
17 I Could Have Danced All Night	MY FAIR LADY	1964
18 Cabaret	CABARET	1972
19 Some Day My Prince Will Come	SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS	1937
20 Somewhere	WEST SIDE STORY	1961
21 Jailhouse Rock	JAILHOUSE ROCK	1957
22 Everybody's Talkin'	MIDNIGHT COWBOY	1969
23 Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head	BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID	1969
24 Ol' Man River	SHOW BOAT	1936
25 High Noon (Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darlin)	HIGH NOON	1952
26 Trolley Song, The	MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS	1944
27 Unchained Melody	GHOST	1990
28 Some Enchanted Evening	SOUTH PACIFIC	1958
29 Born To Be Wild	EASY RIDER	1969
30 Stormy Weather	STORMY WEATHER	1943
31 Theme from New York, New York	NEW YORK, NEW YORK	1977
32 I Got Rhythm	AMERICAN IN PARIS, AN	1951
33 Aquarius	HAIR	1979
34 Let's Call the Whole Thing Off	SHALL WE DANCE	1937
35 America	WEST SIDE STORY	1961
36 Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious	MARY POPPINS	1964
37 Swinging on a Star	**GOING MY WAY**	**1944**
38 Theme from Shaft	SHAFT	1971
39 Days of Wine and Roses	DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES	1963
40 Fight the Power	DO THE RIGHT THING	1989
41 New York, New York	ON THE TOWN	1949
42 Luck Be A Lady	GUYS AND DOLLS	1955
43 Way You Look Tonight, The	SWING TIME	1936
44 Wind Beneath My Wings	BEACHES	1988
45 That's Entertainment	BAND WAGON, THE	1953
46 Don't Rain On My Parade	FUNNY GIRL	1968
47 Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah	SONG OF THE SOUTH	1947
48 Whatever Will Be, Will Be (Que Sera, Sera)	MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH, THE	1956
49 Make 'Em Laugh	SINGIN' IN THE RAIN	1952
50 Rock Around the Clock	BLACKBOARD JUNGLE	1955
51 Fame	FAME	1980
52 Summertime	PORGY AND BESS	1959
53 Goldfinger	GOLDFINGER	1964
54 Shall We Dance	KING AND I, THE	1956
55 Flashdance ... What a Feeling	FLASHDANCE	1983
56 Thank Heaven for Little Girls	GIGI	1958
57 Windmills of Your Mind, The	THOMAS CROWN AFFAIR, THE	1968
58 Gonna Fly Now	ROCKY	1976
59 Tonight	WEST SIDE STORY	1961
60 It Had to Be You	WHEN HARRY MET SALLY	1989
61 Get Happy	SUMMER STOCK	1950
62 Beauty and the Beast	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	1991
63 Thanks for the Memory	BIG BROADCAST OF 1938, THE	1938
64 My Favorite Things	SOUND OF MUSIC, THE	1965
65 I Will Always Love You	BODYGUARD, THE	1992
66 Suicide is Painless	M*A*S*H	1970
67 Nobody Does it Better	SPY WHO LOVED ME, THE	1977
68 Streets of Philadelphia	PHILADELPHIA	1993
69 On the Good Ship Lollipop	BRIGHT EYES	1934
70 Summer Nights	GREASE	1978
71 Yankee Doodle Boy, The	YANKEE DOODLE DANDY	1942
72 Good Morning	SINGIN' IN THE RAIN	1952
73 Isn't it Romantic?	LOVE ME TONIGHT	1932
74 Rainbow Connection	MUPPET MOVIE, THE	1979
75 Up Where We Belong	OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN, AN	1982
76 Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas	MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS	1944
77 Shadow of Your Smile, The	SANDPIPER, THE	1965
78 9 To 5	9 TO 5	1980
79 Arthur's Theme (Best That You Can Do)	ARTHUR	1981
80 Springtime for Hitler	PRODUCERS, THE	1968
81 I'm Easy	NASHVILLE	1975
82 Ding Dong the Witch is Dead	WIZARD OF OZ, THE	1939
83 Rose, The	ROSE, THE	1979
84 Put the Blame on Mame	GILDA	1946
85 Come What May	MOULIN ROUGE!	2001
86 (I've Had) The Time of My Life	DIRTY DANCING	1987
87 Buttons and Bows	PALEFACE, THE	1948
88 Do Re Mi	SOUND OF MUSIC, THE	1965
89 Puttin' on the Ritz	YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN	1974
90 Seems Like Old Times	ANNIE HALL	1977
91 Let the River Run	WORKING GIRL	1988
92 Long Ago and Far Away	COVER GIRL	1944
93 Lose Yourself	8 MILE	2002
94 Ain't Too Proud to Beg	BIG CHILL, THE	1983
95 (We're Off on the) Road to Morocco	**ROAD TO MOROCCO**	**1942**
96 Footloose	FOOTLOOSE	1984
97 42nd Street	42nd STREET	1933
98 All That Jazz	CHICAGO	2002
99 Hakuna Matata	LION KING, THE	1994
100 Old Time Rock and Roll	RISKY BUSINESS	1983

Now, we Crosby fans are never going to be happy with any list of favourites that does not show our hero on top but it does seem remarkable that 'True Love' and 'Now You Has Jazz', to name just two songs that will be familiar to younger people, did not find a place in the top 100. Many contributors to the Bing Crosby Internet Museum also expressed their displeasure with the choices made. However, at least Bing did have three entries from the original twelve nominations of his songs put forward to the AFI members. So how were the songs picked?

The Criteria

The jurors — who were 1500 actors, directors, writers, critics, film historians and others in Hollywood — were asked to consider the following criteria while making their selections:

* Feature-Length Fiction Film: The film must be in

narrative format, typically more than 60 minutes in length.

* American Film: The film must be in the English language with significant creative and/or financial production elements from the United States.
* Song: Music and lyrics featured in an American film that set a tone or mood, define character, advance plot and/or express the film's themes in a manner that elevates the moving image art form. Songs may have been written and/or recorded specifically for the film or previously written and/or recorded and selected by the filmmaker to achieve the above goals.
* Cultural Impact: Songs that have captured the nation's heart, echoed beyond the walls of a movie theater, and ultimately stand in our collective memory of the film itself.
* Legacy: Songs that resonate across the century, enriching America's film heritage and captivating artists and audiences today.

****

Ed Blank writing in the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* was one of the first to comment on the controversial list.

"It obviously helped the songs ranked highest to be featured in a memorable context. Judy Garland sings the top-ranked **"Over the Rainbow"** in a barnyard, yearning for a happier time and place. The song's meaning resonates at the end of the movie when Dorothy, Garland's character, learns that there's no place like home and that Dorothy already is surrounded by the people she loves most. One MGM executive talked of cutting the song because it slowed the movie. Besides, instead of advancing the story it merely amplified the theme. Fortunately, he was overruled. It was to be the film's defining moment and Garland's signature song, especially as her unhappy personal life seemed rife with rainbow-chasing.

Second-ranking **"As Time Goes By"** was sung by Dooley Wilson in "Casablanca," who got the part over contenders Ella Fitzgerald and Clarence Muse. Wilson sang for himself, but his piano playing was dubbed by Elliot Carpenter. The song had been popularized in 1931, when two versions reached the pop charts, but it was Rudy Vallee's film-inspired version in 1943 that reached No. 1. It is then the highest-ranking song on the chart to predate the film identified with it. In "Casablanca," the song is used to characterize Rick's (Humphrey Bogart's) sentiment and anguish over having lost Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) in Paris and from seeing her again now with her husband.

Third-place **"Singin' in the Rain"** also predates the film for which it is most beloved, the 1952 movie named for it. The scene in which it appears is a freestanding one that has no relation to plot and easily could be removed without missing a beat. It expresses, though, the euphoria of Don Lockwood (Gene Kelly) as everything is going well in his life, including a romance with Kathy Selden (Debbie Reynolds). Even the rain cannot dampen his spirits as he splashes along a curb, swings around a lamppost and whirls about as if his open umbrella were a dancing partner.

Audrey Hepburn's rendition of fourth-ranked **"Moon River,"** singing plaintively from a window, seems to have been inspired by Garland's similarly window-based rendition of **"Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"** (No. 76) in "Meet Me in St. Louis" nine years earlier.

Bing Crosby's original rendition of **"White Christmas"** in "Holiday Inn" received sufficient votes/points to place fifth, the only other seasonal song on the chart.

The 1960s (1960-69 for computation purposes) yielded the most songs from the list of 100 — 20 in all. But it's necessary to bear in mind that the years involved here refer to the movies credited with a song's use — not the years or decades in which a song was written, first popularized or even first used in a movie.

The 1950s are represented 17 times, the 1970s 16 times, the 1940s 14 times, the 1980s 13 times and the 1930s 11 times.

The 1990s have six of the final 100 songs, and the period of 2000-04 has three, including **"All That Jazz,"** credited to "Chicago." The song dates to the 1975 Broadway production of the musical and was featured prominently in the 1979 film "All That Jazz," which makes it a good example of a song being assigned a date later than its genesis.

The highest-ranking 1980s song is No. 40 (**"Fight the Power"** from the drama "Do the Right Thing"). The 1990s jump in early with **"My Heart Will Go On"** (No. 14) from "Titanic."

But nearly all of the 22 songs from the past quarter-century rank low among the top 100, as if the AFI tabulators were determined to shoehorn in songs familiar to younger moviegoers.

Even those of us who grew up with rock 'n' roll might ask how ludicrous it is that **"Rock Around the Clock"** ("Blackboard Jungle") and the title song from **"Fame"** rank ahead of **"Summertime"** ("Porgy and Bess"), Nos. 50-52. What are **"Fight the Power"** and Eminem's **"Lose Yourself"** (No. 93) from "8 Mile" doing on there at all? Seriously. No Beatles songs even made the slate of 400 nominees.

We all perk up at **"Ding Dong the Witch Is Dead"** (No. 82) from "The Wizard of Oz," but who can possibly think it's a "better song" than hundreds that didn't make the final 100? No movie had more than three nominees among the 400 officially listed contenders, but three musicals succeeded in getting all three of their nominees into the final 100:

· "Singin' in the Rain" (the title song at No. 3, **"Make 'Em Laugh"** at 49 and **"Good Morning"** at 72).

· "The Sound of Music" (the title song at No. 10, **"My Favorite Things"** at 64 and **"Do Re Mi"** at 88).

· "West Side Story" (**"Somewhere"** at No. 20, **"America"** at 35 and **"Tonight"** at 59).

Both unrelated versions of **"New York, New York,"** but both with a connection to Frank Sinatra, made the 100. The theme from "New York, New York" was sung in the 1977 movie by Liza Minnelli but popularized by Sinatra, who turned it into an anthem. It's No. 31. A song of the same name sung by Sinatra, Gene Kelly and Jules Munshin in "On the Town" (1949) made it to No. 41.

Context clearly helped a lot of songs, but it wasn't everything to voters. The folks who made up the preliminary list of 400 ignored many movie musicals

altogether, giving no nominations whatsoever, despite great scores, to out-of-favor films such as "Mame" and "Man of La Mancha." That attitude toward certain films might explain the absence of the title song **"Hello, Dolly"** from the list despite the lavish staging it received, with Barbra Streisand as its centerpiece. Streisand is represented on the list by the title song from **"The Way We Were"** (No. 8), **"Evergreen"** from "A Star Is Born" (No. 16) and two "Funny Girl" songs — **"People"** (No. 13) and the exhilarating **"Don't Rain on My Parade"** (No. 46), and yet her dramatic rendition of "My Man," surely influential in getting her an Oscar for "Funny Girl," failed to make the list. The latter probably wasn't helped by being identified by her as a classic victim song.

The very popular and much-recorded title songs from many movies failed to make the top 100 ("Three Coins in the Fountain," "Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing," "An Affair to Remember," "Charade," "Born Free"). Strangely, so did the imperishable "Misty," possibly because it lacked the proper context, being used merely as a recording in "Play 'Misty' for Me." Bristle if you will at the omission of songs made timeless by hundreds of recordings ("That Old Black Magic," "I've Got You Under My Skin," "Silver Bells"). But there are even more egregious oversights. How about "There's No Business Like Show Business" from "Annie Get Your Gun"? Its omission is even stranger when you consider that the thematically comparable **"That's Entertainment"** from "The Band Wagon" was noted well enough to rank 45th. But how could they possibly, imaginably, conceivably overlook the two masterworks from **"Carousel"** — "If I Loved You" and "You'll Never Walk Alone"? Or "God Bless America," credited to **"The Deer Hunter"?** And especially considering some of the stuff included?

"OK, all right, you win," as Peggy Lee would sing. Quibbling is half the fun.

Ed Blank

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We could debate the list forever but suffice to say that this demonstrates how important it is for us all to continue to highlight Bing's historical and cultural impact to those outside the world of Crosbyana.

Bing sings the No.5 Top Movie Song

WIG'S WORDS

During the last few months, Bing has been honored with an extraordinary six-hour musical radio tribute on his 101st birthday, as well as the issuance of a new budget CD from Universal Music to celebrate his long-time partnership with Bob Hope. I would like to share detailed accounts of these two developments with you.

Wig and Laura Wiggins

XM SATELLITE RADIO CELEBRATES BING'S BIRTHDAY

For the second year in a row, the nationwide digital broadcasting system *XM Satellite Radio* again featured a special program to honor Bing's birthday during the month of May. As I previously reported last year in "BING" #134, this new 21st century radio system provides round-the-clock broadcasts on some 120 digital channels that enable subscribers to hear the same clear channel programming wherever they tune in, either in their homes or while traveling by car, throughout the United States.

Two major automobile manufacturers, General Motors and Honda, now offer satellite radios in their new models, and strong sales of digital radio receivers are also being reported by retail stores such as Best Buy, Circuit City and Wal-Mart as the number of nationwide subscribers continues to grow. The headquarters of *XM Satellite Radio* is in Washington, D.C., just across the Potomac River from my home in Virginia.

Shortly before Bing's birthday on May 3rd, I was contacted by my friend Marlin Taylor, program director of the station's "Big Band and Swing" broadcasts on their so-called "Forties" channel. Marlin wanted to order several volumes in the Bing Crosby JONZO CD series to be used, along with other studio recordings from Universal Music, in a massive, six-hour non-stop salute to Bing that would be broadcast on the afternoon of May 3rd for the Eastern part of the country, and from midnight to 6:00 a.m. on May 4th for the West Coast area.

Marlin Taylor told me that the program would be compiled and hosted by another friend of mine, Bob Moke, who is a long-time radio personality from the Washington, D.C. area. In addition to being a leading record collector himself. Bob Moke remains an active proponent of the music of the big bands and vocalists from the golden era of American popular music, so he was an excellent choice to present this unusual recognition of Bing's artistry.

In designing the program, Marlin and Bob decided to make their tribute to Bing a "...chronological journey through the 30 most productive years of Bing's recording career..", beginning with "I've Got The Girl" from 1926, and ending with "True Love" from 1956 As Bob Moke said in his opening remarks, the accent during this comprehensive program was on "...Bing's MUSIC, rather than the biographical details of his life and career (which have been so thoroughly documented over the years)..." During the six-hour program, over 100 of Bing's recordings were played (in their entirety), encompassing "...the familiar songs that people bought, played on jukeboxes and listened to on the radio during the mid-20th century, recordings by THE most popular entertainer of his time..."

In addition to his own comments about the individual recordings that he played, Bob Moke also humorously mentioned that he would be presenting other items of Crosby trivia which would be provided by his "...co-host, who might well be the world's leading expert on the life and music of Bing Crosby...", none other than Bing himself! By which, Bob meant he would be utilizing the spoken comments that Bing recorded for the special multi-disc album that Decca Records issued in 1954 to commemorate his 20 years of recording for that company entitled "BING-A MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY".

The skillful interplay between Bing's recorded remembrances of his own career, and Bob Moke's additional observations, certainly made for a thoroughly comprehensive and informative presentation of 30 years of Bing's greatest hits as America's leading popular vocalist.

Space limitations prevent a complete listing of all of the 100 plus Crosby songs that were played during this extraordinary six-hour broadcast, so I will only include a brief description of each of the hour-long segments as they were broadcast. By the way, during the program, Bob Moke found time for each of Bing's 22 best-selling

single "gold records", as well as all but one of Bing's official "40 top hits" (the only one omitted was "At Your Command" from 1931).

The first hour of the program began, as stated, with "I've Got The Girl", followed by seven titles with Paul Whiteman (including one of my favorite recordings, Bing's 1928 version of "Ol' Man River"), "Three Little Words" (with Duke Ellington), several Gus Arnheim hits (especially "I Surrender, Dear") and five of Bing's earliest best sellers on the Brunswick label, ending with his classic 1931 version of "Star Dust".

The second hour continued with many of Bing's Brunswick chart toppers from the early 1930s, including "Dinah" (with the Mills Brothers), "Sweet Georgia Brown", "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?", "The Last Round-Up" and "Temptation", plus two of Bing's first best sellers for Decca Records from 1934, "June In January" and "Love Is Just Around The Corner".

Hour number three covered the heyday of Bing's so-called Decca Blue Label period (which Wayne Martin discusses in a following article), and featured "It's Easy To Remember", "Red Sails In The Sunset", "Pennies From Heaven", "Sweet Leilani", several duets with Connee Boswell, "Small Fry" (with Johnny Mercer) and "I've Got A Pocket Full of Dreams" (shades of Gary Giddins' Bing biography).

The fourth hour covered Bing's many Decca successes from the early 1940s, featuring his first recordings with the Andrews Sisters, other duets with Connee Boswell and Mary Martin, country and western hits such as "New San Antonio Rose" and "Deep In The Heart of Texas", and finished with the expected hit song from his movie *Holiday Inn* ("Be Careful, It's My Heart"), plus a sleeper from the same film entitled "White Christmas" (using Bing's 1942 Decca recording, rather than the 1947 version).

Hour number five emphasized the Black Label Decca years of the later 1940s, beginning with "Moonlight Becomes You" followed by many of Bing's greatest recordings with The Andrews Sisters ("Pistol Packin' Mama", "Don't Fence Me In" and "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive"), Christmas songs ("Jingle Bells" and "I'll Be Home For Christmas"), and inevitably, "Swinging On A Star" and "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral".

The sixth and final hour covered the years during which Bing recorded "McNamara's Band", "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (with Al Jolson), "Whiffenpoof Song" (With Fred Waring), "Dear Hearts And Gentle People", two popular duets with his son Gary, and finished with recordings with two of his leading ladies from Hollywood, "In The Cool, Cool Cool Of the Evening" (with Jane Wyman) and "True Love" (with Grace Kelly).

The only comment that I would like to add about this extraordinary tribute to Bing is to express the sincerest appreciation of the ICC and all of our members to Marlin Taylor and *XM Satellite Radio* for their continuing recognition of Bing's unsurpassed musical legacy, as well as their dedicated efforts to keep his talents alive for a new generation of listeners to enjoy.

The entire six-hour program was re-broadcast by *XM Satellite Radio* on May 15th and 16th, and it is scheduled to be repeated again, probably in July. ICC members who might be interested in subscribing to this special radio service may telephone Marlin Taylor at (202) 380-4470 or contact the station on the internet at *www.xmradio.com.*

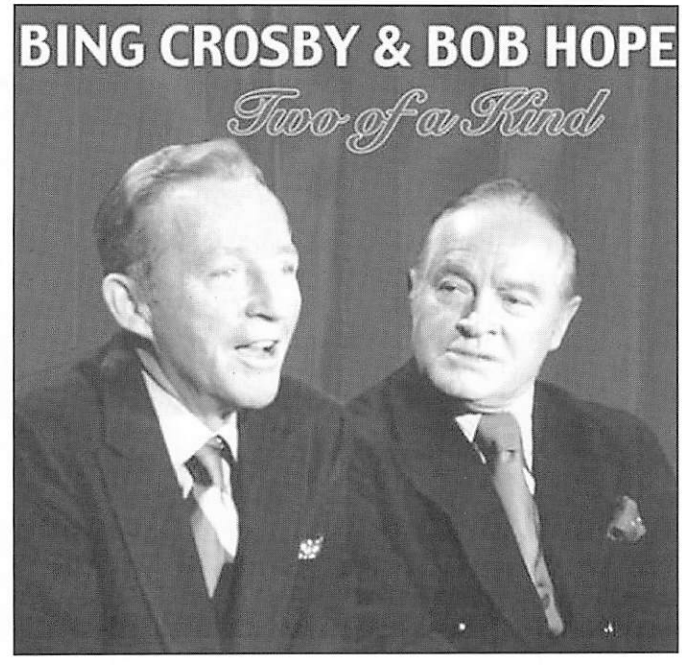
Hopefully, there will be additional Bing programs such as this one on *XM Satellite Radio* in the future. You can bet that I will be working on it.

BING MAGAZINE INSPIRES A COMPACT DISC

After I distributed last year's Summer issue of BING #134 to ICC members in the United States and Canada, I received a telephone call from Bob Zipkin at Universal Music in California. Bob said that he was most impressed with the photo of Bing and Bob Hope on the front cover of the magazine, and that it had inspired him to plan to put together a small number of their Decca recordings to honor them as part of one of Universal's budget CD series from their Special Products division.

I had had the pleasure of working with Bob Zipkin often in previous years when he was producing the series of "Bing's Favorite Songs" on budget CDs (Love Songs, Cowboy Songs, Hawaiian Songs, Irish Songs, Hymns, Broadway Songs) that were quite popular with Crosby collectors at the time. Some of which can still be found in music stores even today.

Bob asked me to work with him again to help select the tracks for this proposed new CD, which I was most pleased to do. It was decided to use only one of Bing and Bob's Decca duets this time, plus Bob's four duets with Shirley Ross (actually, the only studio recordings that Bob made for Decca, except for several with Bing), and five of Bing's solos to make a total of 10 tracks for the disc.



I recommended that Universal use "Put It There, Pal" as the choice for Bing and Bob's duet, as I thought it would be more appropriate than the often-reissued "Road To Morocco" in this case. The four Bob Hope/Shirley Ross duets included the unforgettable

"Thanks For The Memory", plus "The Lady's In Love With You", "Two Sleepy People" and "Penthouse Serenade". When it came to Bing's solo sides, Bob Zipkin and his cohort at Universal, Barry Korkin, felt they had to select some of Bing's so-called "#1 Pop Hits" in order to make the CD marketable to the general public. I had hoped to be able to have them include one or two of Bing's Decca recordings that had not appeared on CD before, but I was not successful in this. So I agreed to various titles that had already been reissued, which is the norm for almost all budget CDs in any event. However, I did recommend that they at least NOT use "Swinging On A Star" or "White Christmas" this time around, and I was successful in that regard.

The final choices for Bing were a familiar, but nonetheless appealing group of his earlier Decca hits, including "Pennies From Heaven", "I'll Be Seeing You", "Red Sails In The Sunset" and "Too Marvelous For Words", plus his later 1954 recording of "Young At Heart" with Guy Lombardo (which has not appeared that often on CD in the United States).

Universal's final requirement was to obtain a useable copy of the photo of Bing and Bob from the cover of BING #134 for the front sheet of the CD package. Since I knew that fellow ICC member (and our new co-Editor) Greg Van Beek of Wisconsin had provided the ICC with the copy for the magazine, I was able to put Barry Korkin in touch with Greg on that subject. As a result, a slightly retouched version of Greg's photo now appears with the CD as well. After a fair amount of backing and filling, which seems to be inevitable in producing CDs by "nostalgia" artists these days, the CD was issued by Universal Music on April 20th under the title of "Bing Crosby & Bob Hope-Two Of A Kind".

Although not specifically designed as a tribute to Bing and Bob's recent centennial anniversaries, this new budget CD does at least provide the general public in the United States a new opportunity to enjoy their unique musical talents in a limited way just one year later, for which we can only be grateful.

I would like to extend my thanks to Bob Zipkin and Barry Korkin of Universal Music for their success in making this possible. It's a good looking budget release, so be sure to pick up a copy while they are available for your own collection. The Universal CD catalog number is B-0002379, and the retail price is only about $7.00.

That's all of my news for this Summer, but I look forward to being with you again at holiday time in the Winter issue of BING.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins
June 10, 2004

(Editor: I have been listening to XM Satellite radio on the Internet and their programmes are great! 100% commercial-free music. Wonderful! Marlin Taylor tells me that XM Radio, being a digital medium, operates under a U. S. law called the Digital Millenium Copyright Act, which limits the play of any artist within any time period without a waiver from the artist's record company So to repeat the Bing programme in July they need permission from Universal Records and this was still awaited as we went to press.)

LOOKING BACK: BING'S BLUE LABEL DECCAS

This article originally appeared in the March 1980 issue of BINGANG. It has been edited and revised for publication in this issue of BING.

When Jack Kapp established Decca Records in 1934, he offered an impressive list of top recording artists on his 35-cent blue label popular series. The artists included Guy Lombardo, Ted Lewis, the Dorsey Brothers, and - first and foremost - Bing Crosby. The very first issue in this series (No. 100) was of Bing singing "I Love You Truly" and "Just A-Wearyin' for You," accompanied by Georgie Stoll and his orchestra. It could be said that Crosby did for Decca what Caruso had done for Victor more than a quarter of a century before. Both of these artists' records sold well and gave the company a dependable profit. During the depression years Decca's blue label series, along with Victor's Bluebirds and Columbia's Okehs, accounted for a very large percentage of record sales.

The first blue labels featured what Brian Rust, the author of *The American Record Label Book,* calls "a striking perspective design." The word *Decca* was printed in gold in shadowed capital letters, creating an unusual and attractive appearance. In 1937 Decca dropped this "sunburst" or "shadow" design and substituted the more familiar block letter logo. One can only speculate on the reason for this change. Maybe the shadow label did not seem "right" to someone at Decca, or perhaps the finely-detailed printing plates caused difficulties for the printer. These labels did not wear well, the gold ink having a definite tendency to rub off. The block letter design was used for new issues and repressings until the series was discontinued.

DECCA
TRADE MARK REGISTERED
NOT LICENSED FOR RADIO BROADCAST
(DLA 738)
Vocal with Orchestral Accompaniment
TOO MARVELOUS FOR WORDS
From the Warner Bros. Picture "Ready, Willing and Able"
(Richard A. Whiting-Johnny Mercer)
BING CROSBY
with Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra
1185 B
MANUFACTURED IN U.S.A. BY DECCA RECORDS, INC.

The "sunburst" design

During the years that the blue label was used, 161 records, consisting of 296 selections by Bing, were issued. These included all of the film music from *Here Is My Heart,* (1934) through *Birth of the Blues* (1941) and

such well-known favorites as "Sweet Leilani," "Ciribiribin" (with the Andrews Sisters), "Star Dust," "There's a Gold Mine in the Sky," "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby," "Deep in the Heart of Texas," "Deep Purple," and many others.

For several years all was well in the record industry, and the Blue Deccas, Bluebirds, and Okehs were big sellers even after comparative prosperity had returned to the country. Then came two events that sounded the death knell for the 35-cent record. Those events were World War II and the Petrillo ban.

The war brought shortages of shellac and manpower, curtailing record production and distribution. Profits began to sag. Decca, as well as the other record companies, could not raise its prices because the Office of Price Administration had frozen the prices of records along with millions of other items. Many of us have seen the wartime record sleeves with O.P.A. "ceiling" prices printed on them. Although Decca could not raise its prices, there was an alternative - and it was used. Decca began to issue some of its records on the 50-cent black Popular label, previously little used. Since Bing's records sold so well, it was inevitable that the company chose to release his recordings on the more expensive label. Although the blue Popular label straggled along through No. 4455, the last Crosby issue was No. 4367, "Hello Mom" coupled with "A Boy in Khaki, A Girl in Lace."

The block letter design

The other factor contributing to the death of the blue label was the strike by instrumental musicians of the American Federation of Musicians, led by James C. Petrillo, which began on August 1, 1942. The ban, as it was called, had disastrous results on the record companies' profits. The few recordings made without instrumental accompaniment were not, as a whole, very successful, although Bing's four black label recordings ("People Will Say We're in Love," "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning," "Sunday, Monday, or Always," and "If You Please") made during this time are not bad. After Decca settled with the union in September of 1943, the royalties imposed upon them added to the cost of making records. Remember that prices were still frozen by the O.P.A. About that time we started to see more of the 75-cent "Personality" black label Deccas. Although we used to buy Bing and the Andrews Sisters for 35 cents, the privilege now cost us six bits (75 cents).

After the war, many of Bing's blue label records were reissued in the higher-priced series, notably the red label and the black label Collectors series. Then, in the late forties, the LP came along, with countless reissues of the blue label Deccas. Now we are in the CD era, and once again many of the blue label Deccas are available to us, most notably in the Jonzo series, which includes the complete run, alternate takes and all!

A final note: To the everlasting confusion of discographers and record fans alike, the records issued by Decca in the USA were released on the Brunswick label in the UK.

Wayne L. Martin

GONZAGA'S CROSBY COLLECTION CAN GROW WITH YOUR ASSISTANCE!

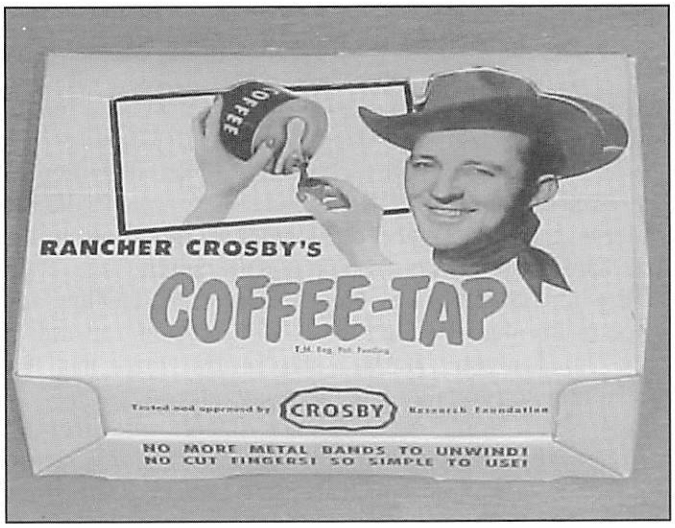
Judy Schmid explains how we can all help to perpetuate Bing's memory.

Stephanie Plowman, Curator of the Crosby Collection at Gonzaga University, is happily accepting donations of Bing-related items for display in Spokane, Washington. Recently, Stephanie put out a request for older "Bing" magazines for the collection there, but she's also mentioned that their collection mostly consisted of awards, sheet music, movie posters, photos, and correspondence that were donated directly by Bing himself. Since Bing's passing, very few new items have been added by family or friends of Bing's, although the Bing Crosby Historical Society's archives were a notable exception to this.

With 650 of us descending upon Gonzaga in May 2003, we had the opportunity to see some of the collection first-hand. However, few of us knew that the Crosby Collection receives no dedicated funding to acquire new items. Out of the many collections that Gonzaga houses, only US$1500 is annually allocated to acquiring new items for ALL the collections – in total! Gonzaga's true mission, of course, is to educate its students, but since it's also the unofficial Bing Crosby museum, we have an opportunity to assist them.

Some of the items pictured here were recently purchased and donated to the Crosby Collection. Gonzaga, as a USA not-for-profit institution, can accept donations of goods and cash earmarked for the Crosby Collection. Donors, in turn, can list any donations as tax-deductions.

A few Bing-fans recently gathered their resources and tried, unsuccessfully, to purchase one of the two known Levi Strauss blue denim tuxedos (especially made for Bing after he was turned away from a hotel in Vancouver) to donate to Gonzaga, but were outbid by someone with much more cash at their fingertips. If a dedicated organization existed that had adequate funding to purchase such items, the tux would now be on display in Spokane.



A few of us Crosby fans, after gathering at Gonzaga a year ago and sensing an opportunity, have proposed a Foundation to seek funding to grow the Crosby Collection. We're in the formative stages and are actively seeking a US-based attorney and/or accountant to get involved. Thus far, our correspondence has been electronic, but we're ready to work to make this a reality. We've got the blessing of Kathryn Crosby to proceed with investigating the start-up of such an organization.

For those of you not familiar with the concept, a not-for-profit Foundation can seek to solicit funds from donors to acquire items to expand the Crosby Collection. We can also work to communicate all new acquisitions to donors through a newsletter of sorts; funding can be sought through a number of federal organizations to allow the hiring of professionals to assist the Curator to complete documentation of all items in the Crosby Collection, as well as allow the upgrading of facilities for their storage.

The Crosby Junior Juke box.

If you're thinking of reducing the size of your own personal Crosby Collection, please consider donating unique three-dimensional items or personal correspondence to Gonzaga rather than selling the items. Consider making a cash contribution to the Crosby Collection when your finances allow, earmarking the donation for the purchases of, for example, any of the new Crosby CDs or DVDs that are available to those of us in the general public but not in the budget for Gonzaga.

For example, a US$25 contribution last December mailed to the Crosby Collection allowed the Curator to purchase the new Road films on DVD. The "new" items purchased on eBay will be part of a refurbished display of Crosby memorabilia in the Crosby Student Center.

If you have any questions or would like to become part of the planning board for a "Friends of the Crosby Collection" group, I can be reached at judy@koenig-adpr.com or by mail at 853 Livingston Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13210 USA.

To send items or financial contributions to the Crosby Collection, contact:

Stephanie Plowman, Curator
Crosby Collection, Gonzaga University
502 E Boone Ave
Spokane, WA 99258, USA
(Tel: [509] 323-3847,
e-mail: Plowman@gonzaga.edu)

Judy Schmid

(Editor: This is a very worthwhile idea and I do hope that we shall be able to make it a reality. Contact Judy as soon as possible if you want to be involved. And don't forget to donate your surplus Bing items to Gonzaga.)

Bing Crosby: Singer of the century

With many publications still stating that Bing was born in 1904, it was our hope that they would commemorate Bing's centenary this year. Noted writer Thomas Sowell was one who duly obliged on the website of townhall.com (www.townhall.com, a project of the Heritage Foundation) and in various newspapers across America and we reproduce his article with grateful thanks to him and his publishers.

May 2, 2004 will mark the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Bing Crosby, whose recorded voice continues to sing "White Christmas" every Yuletide. Other singers who came after him, including Sinatra and Elvis, had their day but it was Bing Crosby who first put American popular songs on the map around the world. At one time, more people had heard the voice of Bing Crosby than that of any other human being.

Part of this was due to the times but much of it was due to the man himself. Bing Crosby came of age just when radio, recorded music, and motion pictures were coming of age during the 1920s and 1930s. Though he was one of many entertainers of that era, Crosby clearly became Number One — and remained so for years.

Bing Crosby's casual, even breezy, style of singing was part of the reason for his great popularity — and it influenced later singers who followed in his wake. It was

a kind of singing that seemed as if anyone, amateur or professional, could do.

That was part of the greatness of his art, that it looked like it wasn't art. He didn't make a fuss about it but he made history with it. It was a little like the way Joe DiMaggio played centerfield, making it look easy, even when it was superb.

Bing Crosby is remembered for a certain style of singing but he was in fact the master of many styles . He was called "the crooner" because of his sweetly plaintive love songs, including his theme song, "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day." But his raucous novelty songs were also classics — from "I'm an Old Cow Hand" to his duets with Bob Hope, such as "Road to Morocco."

Then there were songs with an ethnic tinge like "McNamara's Band" for the Irish and "Small Fry" for blacks. No one associates Bing Crosby with country music but his rendition of "Walking the Floor Over You" stacks up against any of them. Frankie Laine sang the classic theme song for the TV series "Mule Train" *(sic)* but Crosby's version is right up there with it.

Bing Crosby could do it all. His versatility was unmatched by anyone before him or after him. Moreover, his versatility extended beyond singing to comedy — as in his series of Road movies with Bob Hope — and even to tragic drama, as in his portrayal of an alcoholic in *The Country Girl.*

Later generations of young people turned to very different styles of singers and entertainers in general: more brassy, flamboyant, down and dirty — not only on stage, but in their private lives, which became in fact quite public in an age of widely read scandal sheets.

Bing Crosby was by no means goody-two-shoes, especially in his younger years. But his peccadilloes were not for public display and his style was not in your face.

It is hard to remember that even super stars are not born super stars. For years, Bing Crosby was simply a singer with Paul Whiteman's band. Nor was he prepared to follow the advice of those who told him that he could go make it on his own.

It was only after Crosby's youthful peccadilloes caused Paul Whiteman to fire him that he had no choice but to go out on his own. The rest, as they say, was history.

Some indication of Bing Crosby's standing before then may be suggested by a headline about his first marriage in the show-business publication "Variety": "Dixie Lee Marries Band Singer." Some of her friends warned that she would end up having to support him.

What of Bing Crosby the man? Some have depicted him as a strict, or even harsh, father. But standards of parenting were very different then — and the end results not necessarily worse than those of today.

Perhaps the best measure of anyone is how they treat those who can do nothing for them. When Bing Crosby was the brightest star in show business, he was protective of young singers and actors with whom he worked.

When a young singer with whom he was singing a duet made a small slip, Crosby would immediately make a bigger booboo and say: "Oh, I messed up! Let's do that again." Anthony Quinn remembered how, back when he was "nobody", Bing Crosby saved him from a bitter attack from Dorothy Lamour. That's class.

Thomas Sowell

(Editor: Another centenary tribute was put on by Aptos Academy students in sixth through eighth grades from April 30 through May 2 at 7 p.m. The show was called "Off to Morocco, a Tribute to Bob, Bing and Dotty". The pre-show publicity stated "This hilarious theatrical production is based on the craziest, most delightful of the six "Road to" movies made by the fabulous trio, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour." We did not see any reviews of the show but all credit to Aptos for putting together this tribute. Aptos is located on the "sunny side" of the Monterey Bay in Santa Cruz County, which is one of the smallest counties in California)

The singer of the Century in action

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Marian Aston, 9 Chetwynd Gardens, Stafford Rd., Cannock, Staff WS11 4AR, UK

FOR SALE

1. Album of twelve 78's records
2. Cards from Kathryn Crosby dated 7/12/78 and 21/3/79 to Don Small, Secretary of Crosby Circle set up in Cannock, Staffs
3. Copy of *Bing Crosby's Record of Golden Discs*, written by Don Small dated 26/1/79
4. Lovely card sent to John Morris of Cannock dated January 9, 1977 signed by Bing.

If any interest, please ring 01543 504726.

Ray Avery Archives, 438 Calle San Pablo, Suite H, Camarillo, California 93012, USA (tel: [805] 388-4668, e-mail: raveryjazz@aol.com)

FOR SALE BY MAIL AUCTION: Records, music literature and photographs and movie memorabilia (including Bing Crosby collectables).

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE, UK

Arthur still has some of the coloured A4 sized (approx. 8" by 11.5") collage of the stamps he has produced in recent times and this has been produced as a limited issue of 250. It costs £3 for UK members. Sadly it has proved uneconomical to also offer it to USA and Canadian readers. The collage would look lovely in a frame. See page 16 of the Summer 2002 issue of BING for a photograph of the collage.

Alan Dennen, 144 Hart Street, Unit 19, Taunton, MA 02780, USA (phone: [508] 823-0835, e-mail: alan090250@yahoo.com)

My father recently passed away and he left a very large collection of LPs & 78s. He was a major Bing Crosby fan, and as far back as I can remember (I'm 53). There are other artists in the collection, but the vast majority of records are Crosby. They date from the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. I am looking to sell them, and will forward lists to anyone wanting them. On the lists made, there are prices indicated by each record/set of recordings. I got them from two sources, "The Official Guide To Records" by Jerry Osborne and "American Records" by Tim Neely (however, the prices are not set in stone, and I suggest and will accept reasonable offers). Shipping and handling not included.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your requirements for Bing on DVD and video. See also www.FesFilms.com

Footlight Records, 113 East 12th St., New York, NY 10003, USA (Tel: (212) 533-1572, Fax: (212) 673-1496, e-mail: footlight1@aol.com)

For your Bing needs on CD and Vinyl. See also www.footlight.com

Mike Kaptanis, 64 Kingsley Drive, Yonkers, New York 10710, USA (e-mail: mmgkaptan@aol.com. Tel: (Home) (914) 779-9728)

For sale: Original 78 rpm record of Bing's first record, "I've Got the Girl," with Al Rinker and Don Clark's orchestra. It is in excellent condition and is a very rare record.

Mrs. Hazel Kelly, 39 Southwold Crescent, South Benfleet, Essex, SS7 5SR, UK (Tel: 01268 793444)

Mrs. Kelly is faced with the disposal of her late husband's huge Bing collection. In total, there are 300 12" LPs, 36 10" LPs, 11 boxed sets, the *Bing's Hollywood* set, 156 CDs, 322 cassettes, 168 78s and 80 videos, all Bing. Ideally she would like a single purchaser to collect the lot. Please contact Mrs. Kelly direct.

Jay Lineberry, 3907 Fairall Drive, Greensboro, North Carolina 27401, USA

WANTED: VHS tape copies (American standard) of *Little Boy Lost* and *Man On Fire*.

Wayne Martin, 435 So. Holmes Ave. Kirkwood, MO 63122, USA

FINAL ISSUE OF "BINGANG"

"I still have extra copies of the final issue of "Bingang." If you would like copies, you can have them for the cost of shipping: $2.00 apiece in U.S.A. and Canada, sent by first-class mail; $5.00 overseas, sent by air mail. U.S. funds only, check or money order on a U.S. bank. Make payable to Wayne L. Martin, and send your order to our Kirkwood address."

Raymond F. Mitchell, 71 Combe Rd., Farncombe, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3SL, UK (Tel: 01483 417194, email: langstune@hotmail.com)

Eddie Lang Discography - Feeling My Way

Ray has produced an incredible book running to 376 pages with 32 pages of black & white photos and 8 pages of colour record labels. It's hard bound in blue linen type Buckram with gold blocking to front and spine, A4 size. Cost is £75 + post and packaging. Contact Ray direct for further details.

Wayne "Dennis" Nale, 3335 Latham Drive, Dallas, Texas, 75229, USA

WANTED: Bing's two recordings of "On the Alamo," 1955 version on Decca LP DL-4415 or DL-8575; and 1975 version on London LP SHU-8489. Also Bob Crosby Bell 78 containing "Steam Heat" and "Happy Wander." Discs only, no tapes.

Select Circles, P. O. Box 302, Riverside, CT 06878, USA (Phone: 203-661-8421)

Select Circles have a large stock of Bing CDs. Write or call for information.

Andrew A. Smith, 20 Elmfield Court, Morley, Leeds LS27 0EP, UK (Tel. 0113 2528483)

For Sale: The Very Best of Bing Crosby 3CD set (1995): £25 including postage.

Mrs. Taylor, 10 Stonebarn Lane, Palace Fields, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2QE, UK (Tel. 01928 718054)

Mrs. Taylor has to dispose of her late husband Robert's collection of Bing LPs, 78s, CDs, books and reel to reel tapes (plus tape recorder). She is happy to sell this at a competitive price but ideally she would like to raise funds to help with the replacement of her son's wheelchair. Please contact her direct.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins, address on inside cover

Wig still has a small supply of his 'must have' discography *Bing Crosby's Commercial Recordings - from 78s to CDs*. Get one while you still can! Softbound, $17.50 postpaid in the USA. UK members can obtain the book from Jim Reilly, 27 Beaulieu Road, North End, Portsmouth, Hants PO2 0DN, UK (phone 02392-666677). Price: UK £10 (inc. p. & p.), Mainland Europe & Ireland £11 (inc. p. & p.).

BING BINDERS

Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to either be inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ

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Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail bingsfriends81@earthlink.net - Web Site address - http://home.earthlink.net/~bingsfriends81/)

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

Internet sites:

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.kcmetro.edu/~crosby/
This is a wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby
http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/3754/bing.html

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, 10 Collingwood Drive, Mundesley, Norfolk NR11 8JB, UK (phone/fax: 01263 722818,
e-mail: gerry.stonestreet@virgin.net,
website: www.GnuDawn.co.uk/intune)
Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £17.40 for the UK, £19.80 for Europe and £26.40 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card. Highly recommended.

Memory Lane, P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England.(www.memorylane.org.uk
e-mail: mail@memorylane.org.uk)

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, *Memory Lane* also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - Britain's favourite vocalist. Published quarterly and attractively printed and presented, each edition includes exclusive articles by a team of world-class writers and journalists plus Picture Pages, CD and Cassette reviews, Readers letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A *"must"* for 78 RPM collectors. 3 First Class stamps (or 3 IRCs) will bring a sample copy and full details.

Vintage Record Mart, 'Sarsden', Lower Common, Aylburton, Nr. Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6DR, UK

This is a 32 page quarterly trading magazine for collectors of 78s. Annual subscriptions are UK £8, Europe £10.40, USA & Canada £12.20, Australia and New Zealand £12.80.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN, UK

Eddie Cantor Appreciation Society, c/o Michelle Malik, 14611 Valley Vista Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91403, USA (email: cantorfan@aol.com
website: http://www.eddiecantor.com/)

Rosemary Clooney, http://www.rosemaryclooney.com/

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Denis Holland, 84A Wolverhampton Rd., Stafford ST17 4AW, UK (phone: 01785 213987).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: http://www.jolson.org/)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com , website: www.btinternet.com/~flias/)

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR, UK

The International Mills Brothers Society, c/o Daniel Clemson, 604 N. Market St., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-2727, USA (Phone: (717) 697-4271, e-mail: MillsBros1@aol.com, website: www.millsbrotherssociety.org/)

Nelson Riddle Appreciation Society - Alan Wright, 4 Jardine Cottages, Templewood Lane, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4BQ, UK (Phone / Fax 01753 663869, website: www.btinternet.com/~mike.leach
e-mail:mike.leach@btinternet.com)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs Margaret Cummings, National Secretary, 36 Hillcrest Rd., Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield B72 1EN, UK (tel: 0121-350-0683,
website: www.sinatra-ms.com/Sinatra.html)
Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)
Kate Smith Commemorative Society, P. O. Box 3575, Cranston, RI 02910, USA (e-mail: pinky@wzrd.com - website: http://katesmith.org/)
Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

Books 'n' Bing

1. Chattanooga Choo Choo - the life and times of the world famous Glenn Miller Orchestra

by Richard Grudens - published by Celebrity Profiles Publishing Company, ISBN: 1-57579-277-X

The latest book from Richard Grudens looks at the Glenn Miller Orchestra through the words of many of its original musicians, vocalists, arrangers, observers, journalists and others in a similar format to Richard's book on Bing. Naturally the main focus is on the Orchestra's halcyon time from 1939 to 1944 but Glenn Miller's formative years are not neglected nor is the period after his death when his Orchestra continued to prosper playing the distinctive Miller sound. I hadn't realised that 'Chattanooga Choo Choo' was the first million selling record for 15 years and to commemorate this, Glenn Miller was presented with the first gold record on February 10, 1942. It's a nice book that will mean a lot to Glenn Miller enthusiasts and to anyone who likes our type of music. Kathryn Crosby has written the foreword and Bing is featured in a short chapter which looks at his work with Glenn in England in 1944.

The book can be obtained over the Internet from www.richardgrudens.com for $21.95 (post-paid in the USA) or from Celebrity Profiles Publishing, Box 344 Stonybrook, NY 11790 (Phone: [631] 862-8555). UK members can obtain the book by remitting an additional $2 and Richard promises to sign all copies he sends out. His next book will be about Al Jolson.

2. Miss Peggy Lee - A Career Chronicle

by Robert Strom, foreword by Keely Smith.

ISBN 0-7864-1936-9, ca. 80 photographs and illustrations, discography, appendices, bibliography, index. [312]pp. illustrated case binding (7 x 10) $49.95. Not yet published, available in October from the publishers, McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640 (Orders only Tel: 800-253-2187, www.mcfarlandpub.com/)

We have supplied the author with information about Peggy Lee's work with Bing and we note the imminent publication of his book. The publicity states: "Peggy Lee holds a special place in the history of American popular and jazz music. From her birth on May 26, 1920, to her final recording on August 26, 1995, to the New Yorker's obituary from February of 2002, these chronological entries cover every moment of her professional life. Detailed entries describe recordings (both albums and songs), radio and television appearances, her work in films, and her songwriting efforts, draw from interviews with Lee and others, nightclub and concert reviews, and a wealth of other sources. Appendices list songs that Lee performed and recorded and a selective list of her CDs. The work concludes with a bibliography and is illustrated with many rare photographs."

BING-ING AROUND

Pete Cakanic is back! And he's been reading a Bing-related book too.

Does anyone recall Bing ever being called a "superstar"? Even at the height of his popularity when he was Number One at the movie box office, in recording sales, and in radio show ratings? He was referred to as "King of the Crooners" by some, but Bing preferred to be called "the Old Groaner."

Nowadays, one opens a tabloid or entertainment section of a newspaper, and it seems that every other artist is a superstar or a megastar, a diva, even a goddess. And the males are all "hunks."

BING/I.C.C. policy doesn't condone a put-down of any artist, and this note is not intended to do so. It is an observation of how press agents and lazy writers have distorted the meaning of "superstar." An astronomy text notes that the Hubble telescope recently discovered a new "superstar" 28,000 light years away from the earth. It is as big as our whole solar system and its mass is 100 times the mass of our sun. No human can fit that description!

If the current entertainers are superstars, then Bing was a constellation.

* * *

If you haven't read *Skylark, the Life and Times of Johnny Mercer,* it's time to do so. Written by Philip Furia, a professor at the University of North Carolina, the 304-page book has many references to Bing.

It's a warts-and-all book and discusses Johnny's mean personality when he indulged in too much alcohol. The author delves into Mercer's alleged love affair with Judy Garland and states that he loved her most of his adult life.

The book jacket says: "Judy Garland became Johnny Mercer's muse. . . and he loved the "pilgrim" soul in her with a passion that lifted and plunged him to new levels of lyrical rapture and anguish. Without her, his lyrics might be remembered today as clever, vernacular, jazzy evocations of the swing era. Because of his love affair with Judy and his timely collaboration with Harold Arlen, Mercer's lyrics endure as timeless standards that register romantic agony as poignantly as any songs in the history of American popular music."

Bing met Ginger, Johnny's wife of many years, before the lyricist did. Bing dated her briefly while with Paul Whiteman. (Bing also met Dolores before Bob Hope did.) There are about 30 references to Bing. No doubt the professor did much research, but he came up with some things that are utterly meaningless in a book about Mercer. An example is an alleged sexual encounter Judy had with Frank Sinatra underneath a nightclub table.

Johnny Mercer with his friend, Bing

On the other hand he was a little lazy in depicting Johnny's ethnic heritage. He writes that his grandfather came from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. That political body included many ethnic groups, including Austrians, Hungarians, Bohemians, Slovaks, Slovenians, and Croations to name some, which the author ignores.

Johnny's grandfather, Giovanni Ciucevich, came to the U.S. in the 1850s and ran the Yankee blockade in the Civil War, bringing supplies to Savannah. Mercer's mother Lillian was George Mercer's secretary and became his second wife when he was widowed. That Johnny is part Croatian is a revelation to me, since both of my parents came to the U.S. from Croatia in the early 1900's, but the professor doesn't use the word Croatian. He quotes Johnny as saying, "I get my melancholy side and musical talent from my mother's Dalmatian roots.

It is delightful to read about his collaborations, to be able to read some of his lyrics and how simply they came about, but it is sad to read of his last days. A great book! It is fitting to see a lyricist get top billing over a composer as Johnny Mercer did most of his professional life.

* * *

I recently purchased the 14-volume CD set produced by Gord Atkinson. This is to add a ditto mark to our editor's frequent reminder that this is a super collectable for Bingers. If your budget doesn't allow for the complete set at one time, may I advise you to at least buy Nos. 13 and 14, "Crosby Christmas," parts 1 and 2. They are much more than Bing singing Christmas songs. There are many interviews with Bing's contemporaries and one really good one with Frank Sinatra, Jr. speaking in awe about rediscovering Bing's unique singing after playing a video of *High Society.*

* * *

Later I dug up the John Salisbury 39-week interview with Bing on Portland, OR radio. The series was reproduced on 39 tapes by Redwood Nostalgia of Washington state and was also called "The Crosby Years." I got a jolt out of a bit in part 33, 1952-53. Bing teamed up with his son Gary to plug *Call Me Lucky.* Gary sounds happy plugging Bing's book and says, "Maybe I'll write a book someday, *Son of Call Me Lucky.* "Thanks for the plug, Gary," Bing said. "If you ever write a book, I hope I can help you." Little did Bing know of the horror that would come about.

Asked about plans for a future book, Bing said he had been keeping some notes and had thoughts about doing a ten-chapter book about people he knew - not all show business people. It could be golfers and jockeys and would definitely include people with humor: Phil Harris, W. C. Fields, Bob Hope. I wonder if those notes are somewhere where Kathryn Crosby can find them.

Throughout the weeks of Bing interviews, an announcer named one of our own, Vernon Wesley Taylor, as a consultant. Vern is a member of all the Bing clubs. On the last tape, Taylor is thanked and briefly interviewed. The broadcaster noted he could not have produced the program without the help of Taylor's knowledge and Bing collection and to his worldwide access to other Bing collectors who supplied some of the rare recordings played.

* * *

We all know Bing doesn't get the press he deserves, but I have found tying him into a local event or personal situation is one way to help do that. When the Masters Golf event came into town (it is Augusta, GA's exposure to world-wide publicity) I dropped a note to a local columnist and Metro editor of the *Augusta Chronicle,* Bill Kirby.

I wrote telling of Bing's importance in popularizing golf. In his column on page one of the Metro edition he wrote: "Pete Cakanic of North Augusta says we should take time this week to applaud the impact singer Bing Crosby has had on the sport of golf, particularly beginning pro-am golf in 1937. 'He probably did more than any other individual to popularize golf among the masses,' Mr. Cakanic says."

At the Crosby Centennial at Gonzaga last year Mrs. Crosby told us Harry Crosby was in Europe on a honeymoon with his new "Croatian" wife. Asked later if she was "Croatian-American," Mrs. Crosby said she was born in Zagreb and that her parents still live there.

I put a short article together and sent it to the Croatian Fraternal Union, a lodge and insurance provider. In the article I noted that Bing had recorded in French and Spanish, and if he were alive I'm sure he could have mastered enough Croatian to sing to his new daughter-in-law. I did the same after learning of Mercer's part-Croatian heritage. Both were printed. The CFU house organ goes out to about 100,000 members.

This is but a minute example of how we can promote Bing. Write to newspapers and to radio and TV stations. Your local newspaper and a favorite columnist are probably the best bet for plugging Der Bingle.

* * *

It was with great appreciation that I read Bob Ault's discussion of the variance in speeds of 78 rpm recordings and the masterful Wayne Martin article on "original" recordings and why most masters don't exist.

To bring us up-to-date on modern recording flaws is some information printed in the *Augusta Chronicle.* It

was written by Associated Press reporter Peter Svensson with the headline "Optical Discs Might Be Less Immortal Than Once Thought." A subtitle "The Fragile Lives of Compact Discs" has a chart diagramming a CD:

LABEL: This thin layer stands between the elements and a CD's fragile data. Even minor scratches can eliminate data.

LACQUER: (Below the label). If this sheer seal is poorly applied or damaged, oxygen and moisture can reach the data layer.

DATA LAYER: This ultra-thin layer of aluminum is subject to oxidation.

COVER: The laser passes through this thick, clear plastic before reading the data. Deep scratches or warping can disrupt the laser, making the data unreadable.

The writer reports an experience of a graphic designer who, when he moved his more than 2,000 CDs, took one that was skipping badly and held it up to the light. "I was kind of shocked to see a constellation of pinpricks, little points where the light was coming through the aluminum layer."

His collection was suffering from "CD rot," a gradual deterioration of the data-carrying layer. It's not known how common it is, but it's just one of a number of reasons that optical discs might be less long-lived than first thought.

Companies used alleged ruggedness of CDs to justify high prices, the article points out. According to Jerry Hartke, Media Sciences, Inc., of Marlborough, Mass., a laboratory that tests CDs, "rotting can be due to poor manufacturing." However, in Mr. Hartke's view it's more common that discs are rendered unreadable by poor handling on the part of the owner. "Most people believe the underside is fragile, when in fact it's the side with the label. Scratches on the underside have to be fairly deep to cause skipping, but the pressure of a pen on the label side can dent the aluminum."

That was quite interesting to learn. Like most that are now using CDs almost exclusively, I was always concerned with the bottom and will continue to be, but I'll be more careful with the label henceforth.

Pete Cakanic
509 Pershing Drive
North Augusta, SC 29841
Email: bingfan@comcast.net

(Editor: Thanks for the warning, Pete. I shall treat the top part of my CDs far more carefully in future too In fact, now may be the time to start copying my older CDs to CD-Rs to preserve them.)

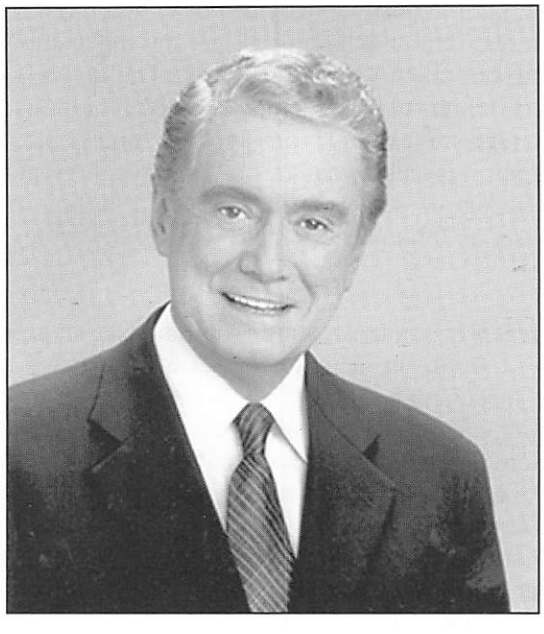
Bing In 2004

Our new American Co-Editor, Greg Van Beek, has been very busy this year, and he tells us all about it.

As I write this, the year 2004 is barely five months old. Yet in this relatively short period of time, I've had several unique and amazing opportunities to promote Bing, which I thought might be of interest.

The first took place in January, when I learned my dear friend Nick Perito would be conducting the orchestra for a concert in San Diego featuring the one and only Regis Philbin. Now his name might not be very well known in the UK and other parts of the globe where ICC members are located, but Regis has been a very successful television personality in the US for close to forty years. He can be seen on the ABC-tv network each weekday morning for an hour with his very popular "Live With Regis & Kelly" talk show. He also hosted the game show "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" which was an American institution with television viewers in 1999-2000 after it was imported from the UK. In his "spare" time, Regis occasionally tours around the country with a nightclub act he shares with soap actress Susan Lucci.

What many people probably don't know is that Bing helped launch Regis' career as a singer! Comic Joey Bishop hosted a late-night talk show on ABC-tv from 1967-1969, and Regis Philbin was his "sidekick" on the show. Johnny Carson had Ed McMahon, so Joey had Regis. One night in October, 1967, Joey had none other than Bing and Kathryn Crosby as his guests. Regis was (and is) an unabashed fan of Bing, and dropped a hint to Joey that he'd love to have Bing sing a few of his favorite songs for him on the show. Joey persuaded Bing to sing "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral" to Regis because of his Irish roots. As Bing began to sing the verse, he suddenly broke out in laughter at the sight of Regis. "I can't look at that kisser! He looks so receptive," Bing said. He eventually composed himself and made it through the song. Then came Regis' big moment. He had wanted to hear Bing sing "Pennies From Heaven", but Joey said to Bing that "REGIS would like to sing Pennies for YOU"! Imagine a newcomer to singing being asked to perform one of Bing's biggest hits for him on live TV. Well that's exactly what Regis did, and he did it surprisingly well. It actually led to a recording contract for him!



Regis Philbin

When I learned that Nick would be working with Regis, I told him I have an audio tape of the soundtrack to the Bishop show with Bing. Nick thought that Regis would like to have a copy, and asked me to send him one

to give to Regis at the show. I put the entire show on a tape, and transferred just the two song segments onto a CD for easier access. I also included on the CD the medley Bing sang with Perry Como on Bing's February 1960 TV special, as I know Regis is an even more rabid Perry Como fan. In fact, the two were close friends for years.

The concert took place January 23, and shortly afterwards, I phoned Nick to see how it went. He told me it was a complete sell out, and that he gave Regis my package at their first rehearsal. Regis seemed pleased with it, Nick said, but added he was pre-occupied with rehearsing and didn't have much to say about. So I didn't give it much thought, until February 13.

The phone rang where I work at a little after 10 a.m. that day. My boss answered the phone, and came out of his office to say it was for me. Now this was highly unusual. I could count the number of times I received a phone call at work in the last 3 years on one hand and still have a couple of fingers left over. Naturally, I feared the worst; that something happened to a member of my family. I picked up the phone and shakily said hello. The next voice I heard said "Hello, Greg? Regis Philbin here"!

I couldn't believe it. Here it was only about ten minutes after he went off the air with his "Live" show at ABC-tv in New York, and he's phoning me. He thanked me for the tape and CD, and told me how thrilled he was to have it. He hadn't seen or heard the show since it originally aired in 1967. "I've played it for several members of my staff here, and they loved it. They couldn't believe I sang with Bing Crosby! That's really what started my career as a singer. The next day, I got the recording contract with Mercury Records." Regis asked me how I found a tape of it, and I explained how Bing's fans, in the days before VCR's, would tape the audio from his television appearances on either cassette or reel to reel to at least preserve the music portions. He then asked if I had a videotape of it or if I knew where to find one. I told him I didn't and that it's quite possible videotape no longer exists for the show. A lot of the talk shows in the 1960's and 70's were simply erased over to conserve on the expensive quad tape used. That's the case with a lot of the Johnny Carson *Tonight* Shows, the Mike Douglas Shows and the Merv Griffin Show. Regis assured me that if he was able to locate a video of the show, he'd send me a copy.

Talk then turned to Perry Como, and Regis said how he loved that medley I put on the CD with Bing. "It's just beautiful hearing all of those great songs again. That's from a TV show, isn't it?" I assured him it was, and Regis went on to say "Yeah, I think I have that on video. A few years ago, I called Perry down in Florida, and asked about the show. He wasn't doing well at the time, but he sent me a VHS of it, which I treasure."

Soon, our all too brief conversation came to an end. Still stunned, I hung up the phone and went into my boss's office. I said to him "I'll bet you'll never guess who that was!" When I told him, he too was shocked. "I thought that voice sounded familiar!" I learned when I returned home from work that afternoon that I wasn't the only member of the Van Beek family Regis spoke to that day. He first called my home number, and my dad answered the phone. Thankfully, he was composed enough to give Regis my number at work.

What a genuinely nice man Regis Philbin is, to take the time out of what must've been an enormously hectic schedule (this was only one week before the premiere of his new game show "Super Millionaire", and he was seen in interviews and promo spots all over TV that week hyping it) to talk to me. Not only that, but a few days later, I received a hand written note from him. It was dated February 12 and it read

> Dear Greg,
> What a treat. You don't know how many times I've thought of Bing Crosby's visit to the Bishop show. I thought I would never be able to hear it again and I can't thank you enough. And Perry & Bing were great too. Again, thanks so much.
> My Best, Regis.

It was written on "Live with Regis & Kelly" stationery, and the envelope was also hand addressed by Regis.

The Marie Osmond connection

Less than a month later, on March 3rd, I had another brush with fame, although this one was much more brief. I appeared live on a nationally syndicated radio talk show called "Marie & Friends", hosted by singer Marie Osmond. She, along with her brother Donny, had a popular weekly TV variety show in the mid to late 1970's. She went on to become a successful country music performer in the 1980's before reuniting with Donny in the late 1990's for a daytime television talk show. Her latest venture, the live syndicated afternoon radio talk show, premiered in February 2004.

A friend had suggested I submit a story to her website, www.radiomarie.com, about my life-long devotion to Bing Crosby. I was skeptical at first, but I figured if nothing else, at least it might be some good exposure for him on a national level. So, March 2nd, I did just that, citing many of Bing's accomplishments in my message for good measure.

It must've worked, as the next night, I received a call from Marie's assistant, who was very enthusiastic about what I wrote. I never expected anyone to contact me that fast!! We chatted a while, and she said she would call back later this evening to let me talk to Marie a little bit. I assumed this would be a pre-show interview with me, or some sort of a pre-screening. Boy, was I wrong!!

About 15 minutes later, a producer called me back and said Marie would like to have me on the air. "Great", I said "when do you want me?" "Oh right now, we're on the air here now!" OK, I thought, this should be a cinch. I've done many radio interviews in the past, and am always happy to talk about Bing.

Then came the clincher...the producer said "but you only have a minute and a half to tell your story, so don't go into too much detail." GULP! Now how do you sum up Bing Crosby, your collection, and your devotion to him in a minute and a half??!! I must've seemed incredulous, as the producer said, "will that be a problem?" I said, "No, I'm just trying to figure out how I can condense it that much!"

Before I could collect my thoughts, I found myself saying hello to the one and only Marie Osmond. I was

told not to give out my last name or location, as this is standard procedure for national talk shows. Marie said, "well what would you like to talk about?" I thought to myself you mean you don't know?? So I plunged right in and said "how about Bing Crosby?" "You want to talk about Bing Crosby?" Marie said. "I thought that's what we were going to talk about" I said with a chuckle. "Well I worked with Bing Crosby" said Marie. "Really?" I said. This peaked my interest, as I had no idea Bing worked with Marie Osmond! Unfortunately, there wasn't enough time to get into details of when and where she worked with him.

So I told her a little about my interest and how long I've been collecting. She asked what was the most unusual thing I have in my collection. I said "I have some personal items that belonged to him" and she said "well I hope not too personal!" I mentioned a few things like scripts, a hat, a pipe, etc. Before I knew it, the minute and a half was up and I heard Marie thanking me, and telling her listeners if anyone else had any interesting or unusual hobbies they'd like to chat about to give her a call at the number she was reading. Then, I heard a dial tone! End of call.

Without a doubt, this was the strangest radio interview I'd ever done concerning Bing Crosby! No one bothered to tell Marie why they called me in the first place. They wanted it to appear spontaneous, as if I just called in out of the blue to talk about Bing Crosby, which made the conversation very awkward for both of us. Later, I learned the 90 second time limit must be standard procedure, as evidenced by this message from Marie on her own website.

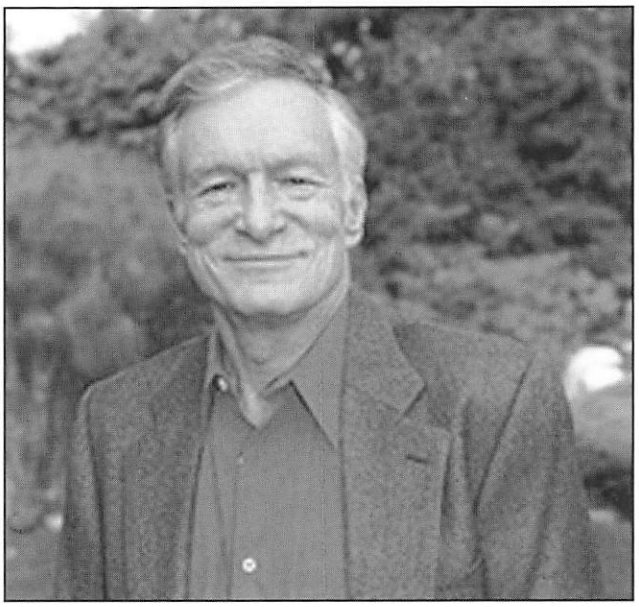
(www.osmond.com/news/marienews.html):

> "I'd love to hear about any interesting, funny, or touching experience you have had. One thing I've learned quickly is that radio is an abbreviated format, 2 minutes or less, which I love because it's like most women. We like to get to the point. (I tried to teach Donny to get to the point, but it never worked) That being said, we need the 'main' points to your idea or story only."

I didn't actually keep track of how long I was on the air, but it could've been two minutes. It certainly was no more than that though! But, if I was able to get a few dozen people thinking about Bing that evening, who normally wouldn't be thinking about him, it was worth it. And besides that, it was a kick to talk to Marie Osmond too!

Hugh Hefner no less

In late March, I learned from my good friend, film historian and archivist Bob Deflores that he would be attending his friend Hugh Hefner's birthday party at the Playboy mansion April 10 and wanted to give him a copy of ICC publication *The Chronological Bing Crosby on Television* that I helped write along with Malcolm Macfarlane and Lionel Pairpoint for his birthday present. I learned that "Hef" (as he likes to be called) is a big Bing Crosby fan, especially of the early 1930's Bing. In fact, Bob told me that one year Hef wanted to screen Bing's 1933 film *Too Much Harmony* at his Playboy Jazz Festival, and called Universal studios to see if he could rent a print of it. Incredibly, he found that they only had one 35mm print left, and it was beginning to deteriorate. Undaunted, Hefner wrote a check for $30,000, and had the film restored and preserved just for his special screening! Hef likes to have the books in his library signed by the author(s), so Malcolm kindly sent a bookplate to me that he and Lionel had signed, and I, in turn, added my John Hancock and sent it off to Bob to include with the book.



Hugh Hefner

Hugh Hefner's 78th birthday party was a glittering star-studded affair. In fact, one of the many people Bob visited with was actor Jack Nicholson. It was all capped by a movie screening of a Humphrey Bogart film for which all of the guests had to appear in their pajamas! Hef, true to the Playboy lifestyle, normally spends the day in his silk pajamas anyway! The guests all lined up to present Hef with their birthday gifts, and one by one, he opened them, some setting aside with a polite nod and handshake, others spending more time with. I'm happy to report that Bob said Hef seemed quite pleased with the book, taking time to thumb through it and show it off to some of his friends like Ray Anthony. So the ICC and Bing have made it into the Playboy mansion of all places!

Bing Crosby & Bob Hope: Two of a Kind

Wig has already given full details of this new MCA / Universal Special Products label CD in his article. As he has said, Barry Korkin of Universal Music was so impressed with the color photo of Bing & Bob used on the cover of BING #134, which I provided, that he immediately contacted his friend Wig Wiggins to see if he could borrow it for use on this album he was working on. Wig, in turn, contacted me. I was able to scan and e-mail the photo to Barry, and the art department at Universal did a fantastic job of cropping out the "King Tut" statue behind Bing and Bob in the photo and substituting a nice blue curtain background instead. It really makes for an appealing album cover, and I would urge all members to support this MCA / Universal release by purchasing a copy. At $7.00 or under, it is a bargain!

May 1st, I was in Chicago, where I attended a Hollywood Collectors & Celebrities Show. There were a few celebrities signing autographs who worked with Bing. Among them was my friend Karolyn Grimes, who played Bing's little daughter Mary Elizabeth in the classic Irving Berlin scored musical *Blue Skies*. It was good seeing her again, after a four-year absence. Another personality who had a brief connection with Bing was Adam West. He's best known for portraying Batman on the classic 1960's television series, but he also was a guest on the 1967 *Hollywood Palace* Christmas show hosted by Bing. At this event, however, he was very much into playing the role of "big star". He also, shall we say, had been "leaning on the grape" a bit too heavy. When I mentioned the Palace show, and that I have a tape of it, he just brushed it off, asking me to tell his assistant. Duly, I did, and the assistant said "Oh yes, that's going to be released in a special." When I pressed him for details, he seemed vague and quickly changed the subject.

I found "The Riddler" from the Batman series, Frank Gorshin, a much nicer and more personable guy. He was seated at the next table. We chatted about his appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show in February 1964, the night Ed presented The Beatles to American audiences for the first time. Frank said "nobody remembers I was a guest on that show too!"

Later on the evening of May 1st, I was a call-in guest on member Ronnie Paul's Flying Home radio show over KAAT in Fresno, CA. Ronnie's an enthusiastic "Bing backer", playing his music on a regular basis on his popular Saturday evening shows. This night, he played audio excerpts from the 1954 Jack Benny television show with Bing and George Burns, and also a couple of cuts from the Bing & Satchmo album. It was very nice of Ronnie to remember Bing's birthday in this fashion, and let me get in a plug for it as well.

May 3rd, Bing's 101st birthday, was a banner day. My good friend David Hendrickson of 1420AM *The Breeze* WJUB radio in Plymouth, Wisconsin had his second annual Bing Crosby Birthday Bash. From 5 am until 8:30 am, *The Breeze* featured nothing but Bing Crosby music. Dave was kind enough to invite me to join him in the studio for the broadcast, which I did from 6 am to 8:30 am, and also let me program the music. We featured some of Bing's biggest hits, along with rarities like "Swinging On A Star" from the August 1944 broadcast with Glenn Miller, an alternate take from the film soundtrack of *Robin & The 7 Hoods*, and the unissued blow-up take of "Don't Fence Me In". Some forty songs in all were used. Dave also taped special interviews with Howard and Kathryn Crosby for the show, and we played some archival interview material from Bing, circa 1955. We even featured Bing's "on the spot" reaction to the death of Elvis Presley backstage at the Concord Pavilion in Concord, CA on August 16, 1977, during what turned out to be Bing's last concert appearance in the US.

So as you can see, it's been a fairly active few months for me on the Bing scene. I hope the trend continues throughout the rest of the year!

Greg Van Beek
May 8, 2004

Kathryn Crosby plugs Bing

Martin McQuade keeps us informed about Mrs. Crosby's activities on the East Coast.

Mrs. Crosby was a smash success at the Brooklyn Public Library, New Utrecht branch on Thursday, May 6. I coordinated the event with the Brooklyn Borough President's office. Over 100 people attended. She sang many songs from Bing's repertoire. She finished with "It Never Entered My Mind", holding back the tears. Many wonderful pictures were shown as well as TV clips. She was presented with a citation from the Brooklyn Borough President's office, honoring her ceaseless tributing of Bing. That night, I arranged for her to attend the screening of her film *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad*, at the Lincoln Center Film Society where she was re-united with Ray Harryhausen. She introduced the screening in an impromptu fashion. Her son Harry and his bride Mihaela, were in attendance.

On Friday night, May 7, Mrs. Crosby, Harry and Mihaela joined my girlfriend Karen Monsen and myself at the Stanhope nightclub to see Steve Ross, darling of New York cafe society. He sang many songs that evoked memories for us.

The following week, I set up an appearance for Mrs. Crosby at the Dutch Treat Club in Gramercy Park in NYC. She sang with Dave Gross on piano to a very august audience including Bill O'Shaughnessy, K.T. Sullivan, Joe Franklin, Wynne Miller (niece of Glenn Miller), Steve Ross, etc. Her repertoire included "Swinging on a Star", "Moonlight Becomes You", "Pennies From Heaven", "Ac-Cent-Chu-Ate the Positive", "I Wish You Love" (in Spanish and English) and "Yesterdays". Her renditions were interspersed with slides of photos from her book, *My Last Years with Bing*. The performance was bracketed with 2 TV clips of Bing and Kathryn duets: the first was "Dream" from the Bing Crosby special of February, 1964; the second was "Everything Old Is New Again" from the 1977 50th Anniversary gala. Mrs. Crosby was in fine voice and was very elegantly attired. She regaled the audience with many amusing anecdotes. This was the last luncheon of the Dutch Treat Club season and Mrs. Crosby had an overflow crowd. The Dutch Treat Club is almost 100 years old and boasts a membership of very venerable New Yorkers. It was a wonderful tribute to Bing. After her performance Mrs. Crosby sold many autographed copies of *My Last Years with Bing*.

All in all, Mrs. Crosby's presentations have generated great publicity for Bing here on the East Coast.

Martin McQuade

Carmela Amari was at the Brooklyn event too as she reports:

Kathryn was in my neck of the woods and she came to our local Public Library with Martin McQuade. We hugged and I gave her 2 rolls of Mentos (mints). I always supply her with Mentos when she comes. She sang, showed slides and signed things for people. Kathryn asked me to go with her to Bay Ridge for a bite

to eat. Pat Kenny, Martin McQuade and I all had a wonderful meal at Lola Bell's Cafe (the site of Kathryn's book signing about a year ago). Kathryn and Martin told us that *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* was being shown at 9:15 at Lincoln Center / Walter Reade Theatre and if Pat and I would like to see it, we could meet them there. Pat and I went to the city and had time to kill so we attended a film about the plays on Broadway at the "Museum of TV and Radio." The film was excellent! We now proceeded to the theatre. Ray Harryhausen was there signing his new book (he created all the creatures in the movie). Harry Crosby showed up with his new bride. Handsome couple! The movie was very enjoyable on the big screen! I introduced myself to Harry and made him sign the back of my Bing T-shirt. He is a very nice guy! Kathryn and family left after the movie and Pat and I headed home. I got home at 1a.m.! I had a great time! Mrs. C. is great to talk to and to be with!

Carmela Amari

Bing's Irish Connection

The Dublin event mentioned in our last two issues eventually came to fruition. Jane Fitzgerald reports.

For an Irish-American who's also a life-long fan of Bing Crosby, the prospect of a Bing-related get-together in Ireland was irresistible. Bing and Ireland. Things just don't get any better for me! And the trip itself lived up to every expectation.

Originally, the idea of a centenary-related Bing event in Ireland was conceived by Sue Horn at the Gonzaga Birthday Bash in Spokane. Judy Schmid, who worked so tirelessly on the committee for the Spokane event, thought the idea had merit, and I just kept thinking, Bing and Ireland.

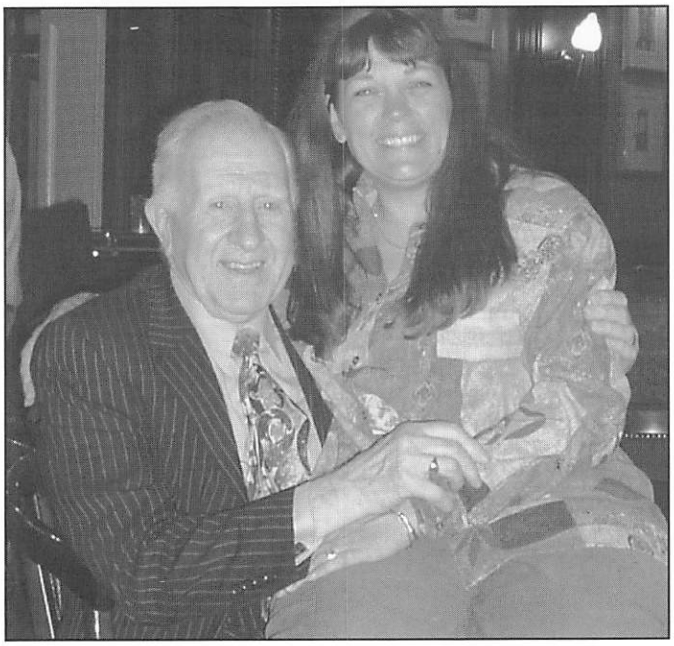
Many thanks must be given to Judy Schmid who got the organizational ball rolling, contacting George O'Reilly in Ireland, and securing very favorable hotel rates, etc. Her work on our behalf is especially noteworthy since, ultimately, Judy was unable to attend the event herself. It's equally unfortunate that several interested fans in the U.S. who had hoped to make the trek, each had to cancel plans for various reasons. And no small thanks go to Malcolm Macfarlane and Michael Crampton. Through their efforts, details of a meeting, styled on those of the International Club Crosby in Leeds, were pulled together, along with some plans for touring some special sites of interest during our visit.

My friend Mary Quinn, who had come to respect Bing's talent, and who also looked forward to another visit to the "Old Sod" accompanied me from Cincinnati, and we made plans to meet up with Sue Horn (traveling from Atlanta) at the airport in Dublin.

The Grand Hotel at Malahide (a lovely little resort community just north of Dublin) proved to be a wonderful site for the weekend. There were historic points of interest within walking distance, and the train made it easy to get into Dublin. (Although the trip back was a bit of a worry for Sue, Mary and me - but that's a separate story.)

The Gathering

Friday evening, May 28 was a delightful get-together at the hotel for dinner, attended by Malcolm and Pat Macfarlane, Michael and Judy Crampton, Dorothy and Derek Perkins, Frank and Bernie Brannigan, and three jet-lagged American lasses. George O'Reilly joined us and we retired to the hotel bar where we were also joined by Raymond and Sybil O'Toole. Raymond sang a couple of the Irish songs we associate with Bing, and George regaled us with his stories and Irish charm.



Sue Horn samples George O'Reilly's charm

George discussed the production of the "A Little Bit of Irish" television special in 1966, recalling that Bing had written the script himself, and paid for the production, the musicians, and the rooms at the Gresham Hotel. It was Bing also who suggested that the program open with "George O'Reilly presents..." and decided to end the program with "Produced by George O'Reilly". George went on to explain that the show was filmed, not taped, and existing copies are in poor condition. While efforts to digitally enhance the original can improve the color, little can be done about the quality.

He told us that many of the musical numbers had been pre-recorded, and recalled that he had made an appointment with Bing to pick him up at the Gresham Hotel at 7:15 a.m. for a recording session. When George arrived at the hotel, the porter said that Bing had left already and walked to the studio. When Bing arrived, no one else was at the studio except for a man who was cleaning and let him in. The man asked Bing what he wanted and Bing replied that his name was Crosby and he was going to be recording some songs there that morning. The man told him he could sit there and wait, so Bing went to find a newspaper and just sat waiting until the musicians arrived. The man who let him in never seemed to be aware of who Bing was.

A Magical Tour

Saturday morning, May 29, the Crosby fans/friends at the Grand Hotel met for breakfast and made plans to gather later for a bus tour that Malcolm Macfarlane had arranged. We were joined again by Frank and Bernie Brannigan who helped as resident tour guides. We visited Howth Castle (pronounced Hote, as we learned from Frank) which was one of the sites used in "A Little Bit of Irish", as well as the Gresham Hotel, passed the Abbey Theatre on the bus, and (thanks to George who procured passes for us) toured the St. James Gate brewery, home of Guinness where we ended up in the Gravity Bar, hoisting a pint in honor of the shared birthday of Bob Hope and Sue Horn.

Outside the Gresham Hotel, (l to r) Mary Quinn, Jane Fitzgerald and Sue Horn.

The Meeting

Sunday, May 30, brought us the day we'd all been waiting for. Many of the attendees gathered for an early meal in the hotel carvery and chatted amiably until we were summoned to the Graham Bell Suite, a theatre-style meeting room complete with audio/video equipment. Members of the Sinatra Music Society attended, as did Joan O'Toole, which was a special treat for me personally. Joan is the widow of Michael O'Toole who wrote the liner notes to the "Little Bit of Irish" sound track CD and whose work on the Centennial Calendar for the ICC helped make it so special. He also provided me with artboards tracing Bing's Irish Connection for use at our local Celtic festival several years ago. I took those artboards to the Malahide event with me and had a chance to talk to Joan about them and how grateful I always felt to Michael.

Malcolm Macfarlane and Michael Crampton said that they had modeled this presentation on the Leeds meetings of the International Club Crosby, and it was entertaining as well as educational. As reported in this magazine in the Spring 2004 issue, Malcolm and Pat had recently visited Australia and had a fun-filled video of a small Bing get-together, hosted by David Currington. One of the Crosby fans was 35-year-old Thane Cooper. Rod Poynter was also in attendance, recalling that he's been a fan since he was 13. The first 78 he played was "Please" and he said Bing's voice just jumped out at him. David, Thane and Rod sang the 1952/53 Australian Club Crosby theme, "It Is Crosby, Who Else Could it Be". This group had uncovered some rare Crosby finds and we were treated to recordings of these along with a never-released sing-a-long "spoof" where Bing slightly slammed Frankie. The Sinatra fans got a big kick out of that.

Derek Perkins introduced some film clips including the Rhythm Boys in "The King of Jazz", the "Ripstitch" scene from "Two Plus Fours", then "Three Little Words" from "Check and Double Check." Michael Crampton talked about the Leeds meeting and messages from Bing. ICC member Eddie Rice had known John Scott Trotter and was able to get an interview, the audio of which we listened to. John Scott Trotter talked about Bing making the "Little Bit of Irish" special and how Bing never took success for granted. JST said that Bing always said, "It's a shame to take the money." Another highlight was a 1958 recording of Bing thanking the British Bing Crosby Society (for a tape they had sent him) to the tune of "Blue of the Night" with Buddy Cole; Bing included the song "All the Time" from the 1958 "Joe" Ferrer musical hit *Oh Captain*. Bing talked about his radio show with Rosemary Clooney and about a trip he and Kathryn made to see Cathy Crosby (brother Bob's daughter) perform.

Michael Crampton shared with us his story of meeting Mr. Crosby when Bing was in England in 1966 making a documentary on fishing. When Michael and other ICC members arrived at the hotel to meet him, they saw Bing chatting with Kathryn, but Bing came over to greet the party, spoke to each of them, called them by name and knew something about each of them and where they lived. Bing then asked them what they'd like to drink. Without writing down a word, Bing took the drink orders and brought back beverages to each of them, getting each order to the correct person flawlessly.

A few days after that, Mr. Macfarlane informed us, Bing came to Ireland to make "A Little Bit of Irish". We viewed highlights from that 1966 television show which was in better condition than I had expected. George O'Reilly talked about the production of the show and a visit to the Waterford Crystal factory to select trophies for the Pebble Beach Pro-Am Golf Tournament. Next we watched some old Shell commercials in which Bing sang the jingle; followed by a similar advertisement in which the singer was Michael Holliday, subject of the book, "The Man Who Would Be Bing". There were several other videos, notably Bob Crosby in "Two Tickets to Broadway" spoofing his brother Bing's fame, the Clay Aiken/Bing duet, "Bing's Britain, A Spontaneous Tribute from a Great Entertainer" in which Bing talked completely without notes; an interview with a schoolgirl from the Scottish Education Association in 1977, the Spokane documentary, "Going My Way," and also a pilot for a TV show with George O'Reilly entitled "Bing's Favorite Irishman".

A Real Education

One of the true highlights of the meeting was an announcement made by Mr. Gerard Hanlon, an ICC member from Waterford who is also a member of the Academic Curriculum committee trying to get Ireland's history curriculum revised to include Anglo-American culture. Mr. Hanlon was very happy to have been part of this committee and to have had some influence. He announced that the Government Syllabus for History, Dictatorship and Democracy of 1920 through 1945 includes Bing Crosby's influence. The textbooks are currently being revised, and Irish school children will be introduced to Bing's cultural dominance and importance during that chapter in history.

Again, the meeting was most enjoyable, thanks to Malcolm, Michael, Derek, George and all who joined in the presentations.

The Scattering

Monday morning was the "last breakfast" at the hotel. The Macfarlanes were leaving later that day for home, with the Cramptons following the next day. Mary, Sue and I headed for the airport to rent a car and tour the southeastern coast, but we made plans to meet up with George O'Reilly again before we left Ireland entirely. That final meeting was Friday, June 4th, back at the Grand Hotel since we all knew how to find it. We had dinner and talked and hopefully got George excited about new technology and re-energized about recording some more of his memories about Bing.

Open note to George: are you plugged in yet? We're all waiting for more stories about Bing, his Irish Connections, and his "Favorite Irishman".

Slainte!

Jane FitzGerald

(Editor: It was indeed a great weekend despite a few teething problems here and there. The tour on the Saturday was booked in advance and was supposed to be in an air conditioned mini-coach with a guide. All we got was an old minibus and when we got hot we had to open the window! The driver did not even know the way around Dublin let alone being able to give us any commentary. But with Frank Brannigan's help and Mary's guide book we managed OK and in fact probably had more fun than if the trip had gone smoothly. The coach firm refunded half the cost of the trip and Jane, Sue and Mary kindly donated this to cover the cost of hiring the equipment for the Sunday presentation.)

Bing and Milo O'Shea at the Guiness Brewery, rehearsing for A Little Bit of Irish

Celluloid Crosby

The release of *Here Comes The Groom* on DVD gives Keith Parkinson the perfect excuse to look back at Bing's 1951 opus.

There are times when the pre-production and casting of a Bing picture contain more surprises than the plot of the film itself. A good example is *Here Comes the Groom* (1951). It was a typical Crosby starrer at a time when Paramount were using Bing to provide the fans with what they thought was expected of him. The story of *Here Comes the Groom* was the work of four writers. Robert Riskin and Liam O'Brien fashioned the plot and O'Brien was assisted by Myles Connelly and Virginia Van Epp in writing the screenplay. That quartet devised a story of Jane Wyman being courted by millionaire Franchot Tone. Bing's character didn't think the relationship appropriate so guess who accompanied Miss Wyman to the altar. Because the film had a running time just six minutes short of two hours there had to be a sub-plot. That involved two orphans having to be returned to France unless Bing married. Everyone watching the film for the first time must have anticipated the destiny of the kids and the outcome of the Crosby - Wyman interaction. Yet audiences left the cinema satisfied. That was due in part to a couple of up-beat songs and the guesting of Phil Harris, Cass Daley and Louis Armstrong. But it was still an utterly predictable plot. What preceded the start of production in the December of 1950 was not so readily anticipated.

Alexis Smith loosens up in Here Comes The Groom

Before the cameras roll on any motion picture there are primary matters to resolve. Who plays who and who tells them how to do it. It is the studio that decides on director and leading players. The first pitch for who played leading man in *Here Comes the Groom* was made by one of the story's originators. Robert Riskin envisaged James Stewart playing the lead role of foreign correspondent Pete Garvey. Stewart was not contracted to a major studio at the time and was being selective in the assignments he chose. Had the film not been made as a semi-musical he would have neatly fitted the role as written by Riskin. But Stewart turned down Riskin's offer. As a result Riskin sold the property to Paramount. He believed the story had comedy potential and told the studio it would be ideal for Bob Hope. However, Paramount executive Irving Asher felt that Bing would be ideal casting for the part of Pete Garvey. Asher went ahead and briefed actor turned director Richard Haydn, whose first two films for the studio were fairly lightweight dramas which had made satisfactory profits. As things transpired, Haydn directed Bing in *Mr. Music* which immediately preceded *Here Comes the Groom.* This allowed the directorial assignment of *Here Comes the Groom* to be passed to Frank Capra. He had directed

Bing in *Riding High* immediately prior to Haydn working on *Mr. Music*. Thus star and director were fixed in place.

If a film's director and star have sufficient clout they can influence other casting decisions. That happened with *Groom*. The part of Bobby, the orphan boy was played by Jacky Gencel. He was a Crosby find. When Bing was on vacation in Paris in the summer of 1950 he saw *Plus de Vacancies Pour le Bon Dieu*, a film in which Gencel played a street urchin. Bing coached the youngster sufficiently for him to speak his lines in *Here Comes the Groom.* In the film's plot Bing attempts to find adoptive parents for other war orphans. Theresa is a blind girl and Bing persuades her to sing before a member of the Boston Philadelphia Orchestra. So impressed is that man with her talent that he and his wife agree adoption. Theresa was played by Anna Maria Alberghetti. She was given the part by Frank Capra after he had seen her singing on the Sunday evening Ed Sullivan Show, a must see variety show for American television viewers in the 1950s. Unlike Gencel, Alberghetti went on to appear in a handful of other Hollywood movies until her retirement from films in 1960.

A month before *Here Comes the Groom* went in front of the cameras a Hollywood newspaper reported that "Bing Crosby wouldn't say no if Faye Emerson says yes for a big role in his next picture, *Here Comes the Groom.*" The reporter continued, "Personally, I think that Andrea King, who is also up for the part, would be better." Neither feature in the film. The "big role" referred to was not that big anyway, the part being that of the wife of the Boston Phil. musician's wife. Andrea King was under contract to Paramount and went on to appear in *The Lemon Drop Kid*, which was shooting on the Paramount lot at the same time as *Here Comes the Groom.* On the other hand, Bing's "choice" was contracted to Warner Bros. Faye Emerson was probably known to Bing because she was about to marry Skitch Henderson. Skitch had been a regular piano playing guest on Bing's Philco radio show. Henderson and Emerson married in 1951 and Faye decided to retire from films in order to appear as a frequent guest on Skitch's television show. By then Skitch Henderson and his orchestra had replaced Skitch Henderson, pianist and he headed a regular television show in the 1950s. The casting speculation on *Here Comes the Groom* ended when Ellen Corby was given the part suggested for Andrea King and Faye Emerson. Corby had been playing character roles in films for the previous five years.

There is a good chance that Bing was responsible for arranging for Irving Bacon to play the part of a butler. The two had remained friends since Mack Sennett featurette days. Bacon found himself in half a dozen of Bing's films during the following twenty years. He was never on screen for more than a couple of minutes and always in roles peripheral to the film's plot. Before *Here Comes the Groom* he had been seen in Crosby pictures as an announcer, a jewellery salesman, a hamburger seller, etc. *Groom* was his final appearance in a Bing film. In addition to Irving Bacon there was another link with Bing's 1930's movie past in *Here Comes the Groom.* Leading lady Jane Wyman can be seen in a bit part as a chorine in *Anything Goes* (1936). You won't find her name in the cast list of that film. She was plain Sarah Jane Fulks before wisely renaming herself Jane Wyman for her appearance in *Gold Diggers of 1937* which she made immediately after *Anything Goes.*

Technically *Here Comes the Groom* boasted two leading ladies. Jane Wyman gets our man in the end but Alexis Smith plays the attractive other woman who eventually realises the true love of her life is Franchot Tone. At the time of filming *Groom* Alexis Smith had been in films for a little over ten years. Until her first retirement from the screen in 1959 she rarely managed to be cast with her name above the title. She returned to the big screen in the mid-seventies and made a further three pictures before her death from cancer in 1993. Aline Mosby of the "New York Telegraph" interviewed her at the time of the film's release. Smith related how director Capra established a story point about her height so that Bing could teach her to "loosen up and realise her sex appeal". Prior that she said, "My five foot nine inch height used to worry me terribly. I could stand up straight in long shots, but as I walked toward the camera I'd throw out my right hip and slump. That took inches off my height." In all the films with Alexis Smith which I have seen she walked tall. Bing's on screen lesson seems to have had a lasting effect.

With casting out of the way shooting began on December 14th, 1950 and continued through to final retakes on February 28th, 1951. Halfway through filming Paramount decided to celebrate Bing's twenty years in showbusiness and erected a sign on the *Here Comes the Groom* lot declaring the same. Why a publicist should select January, 1951 to commemorate that anniversary may seem strange but it was the twentieth anniversary of Bing starting out as a solo act. At the conclusion of filming Capra declared, "It isn't fun anymore." It was seven years before he directed another film.

How did the film fare critically? The critic for *Time* in the issue dated October 15th, 1951 wrote that Crosby and Capra were "up to their oldest tricks and ought to amuse all but those optimistic moviegoers who dare to hope for new ones." The Hollywood press was laudatory as usual. They valued the advertising revenue the studios put their way. Harrison Carroll in the *Los Angeles Evening Herald Express* called it Crosby's best in ages and went on to say "Bing's casual charm was never shown off to better advantage." The trade press concerned itself more with box-office revenue than artistic merit. *Film Daily* reported in its September 7th, 1951 issue, "The romantic pattern of the script was contrived with attention toward making it romantically bright and sprightly. The net result rendered by a talented cast in a roundly good show for anybody's money." And the showbusiness bible "Variety" predicted, "a smash hit...a cinch to be one of the studio's biggest grossers." That was an accurate forecast. *Here Comes the Groom* ended in 19th place in the list of top moneymaking films of 1951. North American rentals on the film's initial release totalled $2,550,000. On the face of it, that wasn't great considering it cost $2,117,000 to make, but Paramount knew that they could at least

double the North American take on world-wide release. Predictably the "Harvard Lampoon" included the film in its list of the ten worst films of 1951. And for those waiting for an intellectual critique, Penelope Houston had this to say: "The general impression is of a loud, strident, rather vulgar comedy in which technique is used to disappointingly mechanical ends, and which a few bright lines of dialogue cannot rescue from tedium."

Over half a century after *Here Comes the Groom* was released we can see that Bing's box office star was in the descendent. In 1951 he was ranked 5th in the *Motion Picture Herald* list of box-office draws. But no one who saw the film in 1951 would know that within five years Bing's appearances in *White Christmas*, *The Country Girl* and *High Society* would bring about a reappraisal of his acting skills and box-office worth.

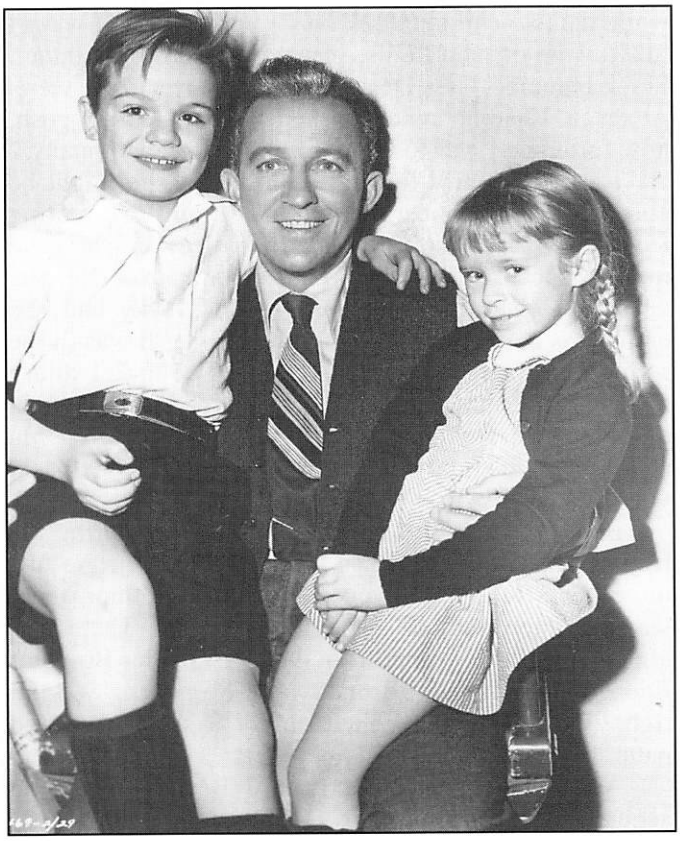
Keith Parkinson

(Editor: It is quite a coincidence that Martin McQuade should have met up recently with Beverly Washburn, who played the little girl in Here Comes the Groom. *Read on...)*

The Little Girl Who Could Cry Real Tears

A hallmark of Bing Crosby's multi-faceted film persona was his warm and enduring rapport with children. Bing had memorable scenes with so many "small fry" of the golden years of Hollywood. Edith Fellows, Donald O'Connor, Darryl Hickman, Louise Campbell, Gloria Jean, Carolyn Lee, Stanley Clements, Carl "Alfalfa" Switzer, Joan Carroll, Karolyn Grimes, Jimmy Hunt, Natalie Wood, Christian Fourcade, Jon Provost, Lydia Reed, Malcolm Broderick, and the Mitchell Boys Choir all shared the screen with Bing in either starring or supporting roles. None were more incandescent and adorable than Jacky Gencel and Beverly Washburn, the precious waifs of "Here Comes The Groom" (HCTG), directed by Frank Capra.

I had the pleasure of meeting Beverly in October, 2003 at the annual Old Time Radio Convention, which was held in Newark, New Jersey. I accompanied Kathryn Crosby to this event, in order to assist her with the selling of her latest book, "My Last Years With Bing". As fate would have it, the vendors' table assigned to Mrs. Crosby was right next to the table reserved for Beverly. I instantly recognized the lovable gamin of Bing's second film with Capra and remarked to myself that she still possesses that cutie-pie countenance which was so winning over fifty years ago. The array of memorabilia atop her table immediately aroused my interest. There were lobby cards, photos, souvenir booklets and sheet music, all illustrative of her durable career. I quickly initiated a conversation and introduced her to Mrs. Crosby. The mood was very convivial, and the presence in the hall of Betsy Palmer, Paul Petersen, Cynthia Pepper, and Diane Renay, all purveying their show-biz mementoes, made the atmosphere irresistible for a hard-core nostalgia addict, such as myself. I bravely requested that Beverly grant me an interview for this periodical, and she graciously acquiesced. An



The precious waifs of Here Comes The Groom

arrangement was made to conduct an interview by phone from her home in Las Vegas.

I began the interview by playing for her Bing's soundtrack rendition of "Bonne Nuit", a Livingston and Evans song with which he lullabies little Suzi, played by Beverly in HCTG. This triggered an outpouring of reminiscences from her. She distinctly remembered the filming of that heart-tugging scene. She was only seven years old. "It meant everything to me. My mother was in the wings. I glanced over - my mother was so touched. There were tears streaming down her face." This prompted me to comment on how natural she appeared on screen. In fact, I reminded her that she was known by the sobriquet, "The little girl who could cry real tears." She replied, "I've always been emotional. I cry at supermarket openings."

I was astounded to learn that HCTG was only Beverly's second feature. After all, she seems so seasoned in it. Her first film was *The Killer That Stalked New York*, a Columbia Pictures release of 1950 starring Evelyn Keyes. Her portrayal in that film of a child who is stricken by smallpox was so sincere that it directly led to her audition for HCTG.

She met Bing in September, 1950 as the thirteen-week shoot was about to commence in Hollywood at Paramount Studios. Jacky Gencel, who was cast to play Suzi's brother Bobby, was an import from France. I remarked to Beverly that, since her French accent was so good, she must have had French lessons. I was amazed to learn that she hadn't.

I inquired whether Beverly had any memory of the marvelous airplane scene in which Bing performs another Livingston and Evans composition "Misto Christofo Columbo" along with a stellar USO troupe,

while the two children look on. "I was so little, I wasn't fully aware of who Louis Armstrong, Dorothy Lamour, Frank Fontaine, Cass Daley, and Phil Harris really were. At seven, I had no concept, but as I got older, my gosh, how fortunate I was to be in such wonderful company."

I asked Beverly for any impressions she might be able to share concerning Frank Capra's directing techniques. "He didn't give me much leeway - he gave me very specific directions." I asked for an example. She cited that charming hand gesture that Jacky and she employ as a greeting throughout the film. "It was in the script, but Capra elaborated on it. Of course, I didn't realize Mr. Capra's fame. When you're that young, it doesn't mean anything to you. You're just having fun and doing a job, and when you get older and look back, you think 'Wow!' I was so fortunate."

Beverly spoke about her work practices during the filming. "There was always a tutor on the set. We had three hours of school every day. Being a minor, there was a limited number of hours on the set. There was always a welfare worker from the Los Angeles Board of Education on the set to make sure everything was all right. When I wasn't called on for a scene, I would naturally be in school full time."

And, what about her co-stars? Beverly made the acquaintance of Anna-Maria Alberghetti, an operatic prodigy who made her film debut in HCTG. I observed that Bing featured Anna-Maria three times on his Chesterfield Radio program after the filming was completed. He even sang with her. Beverly was not surprised. "He was extremely loyal to his co-stars." She thought that Franchot Tone was "very handsome and debonair," and that Alexis Smith was quite beautiful. She grew very fond of both Connie Gilchrist (who played Jane Wyman's mother) and James Barton (Jane Wyman's father). Beverly told me that, prior to filming, Mr. Barton had been in a fire. Part of his nose had been burned off. "Every day he had to go into make-up and they would put an artificial nose on him. I felt so bad for him." I informed her that James Barton had played the lead part of the old prospector in the original Broadway production of *Paint Your Wagon* in 1947, a part which twenty years later would be offered to Bing by director Joshua Logan when the musical was being readied by Paramount Pictures. Even the then astronomical fee of one million dollars could not lure Bing. Beverly was surprised to hear this.

Beverly had very kind words for Jane Wyman. "She treated me like her own daughter. She gave me a beautiful dress as a gift, which I still have. She was wonderful, and Bing and she had a high regard for each other." Years later, Beverly would appear on Jane Wyman Theater on television.

Beverly's most cherished remembrances are reserved for Bing. "He was very laid back and easygoing - not intense. He never went up on his lines. He was incredibly professional and wouldn't need many takes. He did everything the way it was supposed to be done. The filming ended at Christmas time and Bing gave me a beautiful doll in a huge box with a giant ribbon. I named her "Dixie," after his wife at the time. I still have that doll, and every year at Christmas, until he died, he would send me a card. What an amazing and warm person!"

Beverly was of the opinion that HCTG was not a big hit, notwithstanding the fact that it won the Academy Award for best song of 1951, Carmichael and Mercer's "In The Cool, Cool, Cool of The Evening', a tune which Beverly helped introduce, inasmuch as she joins in the reprise in the last scene of the movie. I politely disagreed with her. I informed her that the movie took in over two million dollars in domestic gross, quite a hefty take for its time. HCTG was Bing's only feature released in 1951, and it secured Bing's fifth place in that year's all-important Motion Picture Herald top ten box-office poll. She was very glad to be disabused of her notion.

The very next year, Beverly crossed paths with Bing once again. "After HCTG, Bing convinced Bob Hope that I should audition for the Helsinki Olympic Telethon, which they co-hosted live. Before my audition, I met with the producers and directors. I was filmed during my interview, after which I was told I didn't need to do my monologue. I thought I didn't get the part. Later, I was so happy to find out that I did get the part - the interview had clinched it. On the telethon, I finally got to recite my monologue, during which I started to cry. On camera, Bob Hope exclaimed, 'Oh, God! Real tears. I better take her with me to the tax office.'" Beverly would sort of co-star with Bing and Bob again, since, like them, she has a delightful cameo in Cecil B. DeMille's *The Greatest Show On Earth*. She has a lovely moment when Buttons, the Clown, played by James Stewart, visits the stands and gives her a kiss.

Beverly with Bing on the sitcom set.

Beverly would go on to appear in many highly-regarded movies, among them *Hans Christian Andersen*, *Shane*, *The Juggler*, *Old Yeller*, and the cult classic, *Superman And The Mole Men*. She had an impressive

television career, with a range extending from "The Jack Benny Program" and "Wagon Train" to "The Loretta Young Show" and "Star Trek." Currently, she appears semi-regularly as the natal nurse on the popular soap opera, "General Hospital". She even had a top hit recording in the early sixties with a Pete Seeger song entitled "Everybody Loves Saturday Night But Me." It can be heard on a recent double CD, "Growing Up Too Fast".

Beverly Washburn last encountered Bing during the run of his sit-com. She visited his set and had lunch with him. She said that it was a splendid last meeting. Before our colloquy concluded, Beverly confided one more recollection about Bing, which completely typifies the man. "I have framed pictures of Bing all over a wall in my home. One I'm particularly fond of. It's autographed and inscribed, 'To my co-star, Beverly. I hope to be in your next picture'. Isn't that adorable? I was so blessed. That wonderful man is embedded in my heart and my mind." As she was saying this, a few genuine tears gathered in my eyes. I'd bet there were some in Beverly's as well.

Martin McQuade

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

Keith Parkinson continues his alphabetical look at Bing's film career.

PAIVA, NESTOR (1905-1966) Character actor. He was a sausage vendor in *Road to Morocco* (1942), a thief called McGurk in *Road to Utopia* (1946) and the proprietor of the Cardoza Cafe in *Road to Rio* (1947). His casting in that trio or "Road" pictures embraced his acting specialities in some 150 Hollywood movies from his first in *Ride a Crooked Mile* in 1938 to his last, *The Spirit is Willing* thirty years later. He was a bald guy usually found playing vague foreign types with an accent to match.

PAN, HERMES (1909-1990) Dance director. He was credited as choreographer on *Blue Skies* (1946). It was his sole involvement in a Crosby film and his choreographic efforts with Bing must have made little demand on his skills. Bing had his own rhythmic way of performing dance steps and Pan wisely allowed Bing's own way of moving to music prevail. Pan is forever associated with Fred Astaire. The two resembled each other physically and in the way they danced. He won an Oscar for dance direction in 1937 in respect of the "Fun House" number in *Damsel in Distress.*

PANAMA, NORMAN (1914-2003) Screenwriter, producer and director. He had a major involvement in a trio of Crosby pictures. He wrote the screenplay of *Road to Utopia* (1946) with long time collaborator Melvin Frank. For *White Christmas* (1954) he received co-screenplay credit with both Norman Krasna and Frank. He then took on the dual role of director and screenplay writer (again with Frank) for *The Road to Hong Kong* (1962). His true forte was comedy and Paramount used him for the sketches in their all-star films *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942) and *Duffy's Tavern* (1945) with Bing making singing appearances in both. Bing was also seen briefly in the Bob Hope starrer *My Favourite Blonde* (1942) for which Panama received writing credit along with Melvin Frank. He wrote Danny Kaye's funniest film, *The Court Jester* (1956) but when he tried his hand at directing the results were generally less satisfactory. *The Maltese Bippy* (1969) was one of his later directorial misfires.

PANGBORN, FRANKLIN (1893-1958) Comedy actor. He was first seen with Bing in three Mack Sennett shorts *Billboard Girl, Sing, Bing, Sing* and *Blue of the Night.* His only feature film with Crosby was the 1938 *Doctor Rhythm* when he played a department store assistant. That film typified the Pangborn speciality - a flustered, comic, pathetic individual. His final screen credit alongside Bing was an appearance in the War Bond fund-raising short *Hollywood Victory Caravan* (1945). He carried on popping up in small parts until the time of his death, his last screen appearance being in *The Story of Mankind* (1957).

PARAMOUNT PICTURES Film studio and Bing's second home from *The Big Broadcast* (1932) until *Anything Goes* (1956). Bing worked at other studios from time to time but Paramount could rightly claim him as their main revenue earner for a quarter of a century. The company which used the Paramount name began in Hollywood in 1914. The original studio still stands. It is a wooden shack down the road from the Hollywood Bowl and is part of just about every sight seeing tour for those interested in the history of the film capital of the world. The company registered as Paramount Publix was declared bankrupt in 1933 but it was reorganised in 1935 as Paramount Pictures, Inc. In 1954 the studio introduced VistaVision. *White Christmas* was the first film to be shot in that wide-screen process. Gulf and Western bought Paramount in 1966, by which time the studio system that Bing grew up with had virtually collapsed. The Paramount mountain still introduces the films the company releases and the heart occasionally skips a beat as the halo of stars surrounding that mountain peak invoke memories of those entertaining pictures that Bing starred in during Hollywood's golden years.

PARIS HONEYMOON Film. Released in 1939 this was a typical Crosby picture of the time. It was shot in a few weeks from a story by the screenwriters Frank Butler and Don Hartman who were regular Crosby scripters. They were about to graduate to writing *Road* pictures. Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger wrote the standard quota of four songs for Bing. With a running time of an hour and a half it was the screen entertainment that regular cinemagoers had grown to expect during the first full decade of the talkies. *Variety* summed it up as well as anyone with the comment, "entertaining offering that will click substantially at the box office".

PARKER, CECILIA (1905-1993) Actress. Cecilia Parker was Suzette in *Here is My Heart* (1935) and will forever be remembered by Crosby followers as the young lady with whom he duetted "Love is Just Around the Corner". To the rest of the film going community she will be known as Mickey Rooney's older sister in the Andy Hardy series or the girl who competed with the cowboy's horse for affection in many a 1930's western from *Mystery Ranch* in 1932 to *Burn*

'Em Up O'Connor in 1939. She quit movies in 1942. She was tempted out of retirement for *Andy Hardy Comes Home* in 1958. She would have been better advised to stay home herself

PARKER, DOROTHY (1893-1967) Satirist, screenwriter, poet, short story writer...and songwriter for the purpose of this A-Z entry. I can never come to terms with the fact that this acerbic wit should write a love song specifically for Bing (or anyone else for that matter). Yet she wrote the words and Ralph Rainger the music for "I Wished on the Moon", which was featured in *The Big Broadcast of 1936* (1935). To know more about the lady you have a choice of biographies written about her during the years following her death. As far as her film activity is concerned, the 1947 film *Smash-Up* is of note in that it purportedly mirrored the Bing-Dixie Lee marriage. Dorothy Parker co-wrote the story for that film. Her best known film work is the 1937 version of *A Star is Born.*

PARNELL, EMORY (1892-1979) Character actor. When the casting director wanted a Swedish type at a time when every studio had its own pool of contract players Paramount would oblige with Emory Parnell. Thus Parnell was cast as Sergeant Olson in *Doctor Rhythm* (1938), an uncredited doorman in *East Side Of Heaven* (1939) and Gustav Ericson in *If I Had My Way* (1940). He was also seen as Father Whalen in the Bing Crosby Productions film *Abie's Irish Rose* in 1946. When the studio system disintegrated in the 1950s, Parnell moved over to television where he had ongoing roles in the "Life of Riley" and "Lawman" series.

PATHE GAZETTE Magazine type one-reel short that was distributed to cinemas in the UK. This was Pathe's non-topical filler found in supporting programmes. The ten minute feature was mainly booked to play in cinemas on the ABC circuit. In one 1944 edition doing the rounds towards the end of 1944 Bing is seen being welcomed to the opening of the Stage Door Canteen in London's Piccadilly by Jack Buchanan. Bing then proceeds to sing "Amor, amor".

Bing with the Rumford sisters, played by Gail Patrick (left) and Joan Bennett (right).

PATRICK, GAIL (1911-1980) Actress. Born Margaret LaVelle Fitzpatrick she played an important part in her one Crosby film, *Mississippi* (1935). She was cast as Elvira Rumford who was engaged to Bing's character Tom Grayson at the film's commencement, only to be replaced in Bing's affections by her sister Lucy, played by Joan Bennett, at the film's conclusion. Gail Patrick was also in *The Big Broadcast of 1936* (1935) although she did not appear on screen with Bing. Whilst under contract to Paramount in the 1930s she had substantial parts in medium budget and B pictures such as *The Lone Wolf Returns* (1936), *King of Alcatraz* (1938) and *Grand Jury's Secrets* (1939). She quit films in the late 1940s but found a nice little earner in the 1950s when she became the initiator and then executive producer of the Perry Mason television series.

PATRICK, JOHN (1905-1995) Playwright and screenwriter. He had one involvement with a Crosby film when he was assigned to write the screenplay of *High Society* (1956). He was highly skilled at adapting the work of others. *High Society* had started life as the stage play "The Philadelphia Story" written by Phillip Barry some twenty years earlier. Patrick's other successful adaptations following *High Society* included the novels *Some Came Running* (1958), *The World of Suzie Wong* (1961) and *The Shoes of the Fisherman* (1968). When it came to "all his own work" he will be remembered for the long running plays "The Hasty Heart" and "The Teahouse of the August Moon". He won a Pulitzer prize for the latter.

PATTERSON, ELIZABETH (1875-1966) Actress born Mary Elizabeth Patterson. She was Bing's mum in *Sing You Sinners* (1938) and Barry Fitzgerald's housekeeper, Mrs. Gilley, in *Welcome Stranger* (1947). Between those two films Paramount used her in similar parts playing either loving mothers or crusty old ladies in such as *The Cat and the Canary* (1939) and *Hail the Conquering Hero* (1944). A regular in the TV series *I Love Lucy* from 1953 to 1956 as Mrs. Mathilda Trumbull, she continued working into her eighties, her last film being *Tall Story* (1960).

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN Film. Paramount didn't have it all their own way. Bing's contract with that studio allowed him to play away from home from time to time. The first time he went into independent production was the 1936 release *Pennies From Heaven* which was shot at Columbia. It was sandwiched between thirteen Paramount releases. Bing ring-fenced himself with sufficient musical talent of his own selection to make sure that he had strong support in that department. Louis Armstrong had a major role at a time when black entertainers were expected to be cast in subservient parts. John Scott Trotter, soon to prove his worth as Bing's M.D. on the Kraft Music Hall, arranged the four songs Bing assigned himself for the film. Those were written to comply with the needs of the plot by Johnny Burke and Arthur Johnston. Bing knew that Johnston could write a good tune because he had collaborated with lyric writers on Bing's Paramount musicals. Also, Bing liked Burke's words for "Annie Doesn't Live Here Any More" and arranged for him to do *Pennies From Heaven*. He knew from the start that Bing did not favour the straight from the shoulder "I love you" approach to songs and all his compositions are romantic without being overtly sentimental. Bing also trusted the film's producer, Emanuel Cohen. He got to know Cohen at Paramount before Cohen became a casualty of a studio executive shake up. Cohen went independent, set up Major Pictures and arranged distribution through Columbia because they offered the best financial deal.

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN Song from the film of the same name. It was the first title song to be nominated for an Oscar in the best song category. Bing recorded it twice

within a month, the second time as part of a medley of songs from the film when he took turns to sing it with Frances Langford and Louis Armstrong. Could Johnny Burke and Arthur Johnston have realised in 1937 that they were composing a standard forever associated with Bing?

PEPE Film which coincidentally featured Bing singing the chorus of "Pennies From Heaven". His audience was Pepe, played by Cantinflas, around whom the 1960 film was built. The movie was the brainchild of director George Sidney. Sidney had seen Cantinflas in Mike Todd's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956) and seems to have spent the intervening years setting up *Pepe* with a view to emulating the success of the 1956 film by engaging dozens of film personalities for cameo roles in *Pepe*. Alas, Sidney was no Todd and although he persuaded the likes of Chevalier, Darin, Sinatra and Durante to be seen on screen for a few minutes he had no strong Jules Verne plot on which to hold audience's attention for three and a quarter hours. Bing's brief dialogue plus a few lines of "Let's Fall in Love", "South of the Border" and "Pennies From Heaven" were part of a days work which saw him finishing work on *High Time* and filming a guest appearance for *Let's Make Love*. I saw *Pepe* at the time of its theatrical release and thought it took a long time to go nowhere. I next saw it around Christmastime, 1970, when Granada television screened a heavily edited version which seemed to be even longer than my first viewing.

PEPPER, BARBARA (1915-1969) Bit part actress, usually cast as a down and out. She was Maizie, one of the bar girls in *Birth of the Blues* (1941), her only Crosby picture apart from an uncredited role in *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942) as "the blonde who bruises too easily." She was in regular film employment from 1933 to 1964. She then transferred her allegiance to the small screen where she appeared weekly in "Green Acres" as Doris Ziffel until the time of her death.

PEREIRA, HAL (1905-1983) Art director. For the five year period beginning with *Here Comes the Groom* in 1950 Pereira shared the credit for set design on most of Bing's Paramount pictures. For the record, he also took on-screen credit on *Blue Skies* (1946), *Just For You* (1952), *Road to Bali* (1953), *Little Boy Lost* (1953), *White Christmas* (1954) and *The Country Girl* (1954). In addition he was involved on the other Paramount films in which Bing made guest appearances. He'd been a stage designer until 1942 when Paramount took him on board. In 1950 he was appointed supervising art director of the entire Paramount output. This meant that although he was rarely hands-on he was around to take the accolades, such as an Oscar for *The Rose Tattoo* in 1955. He retired from films in 1968 in order to become a design consultant for his brother's architectural firm. His artistic imprint on the Crosby films listed above is unremarkable. They were all so obviously studio bound that these days they would look quite tatty even as sets for a television drama. However, during his days of employment at Paramount, location shooting was a rarity and Pereira must be given credit for attempting to make every film look different.

Keith Parkinson

More about Gonzaga (3)

It will be recalled that we asked a number of celebrities to write a letter for display at the Gonzaga celebration last year and we have pleasure in reproducing a few more of these very nice messages.

From Twiggy (Lawson)

Having always been a huge fan, one of the highlights of my career was singing with Bing Crosby in his last Christmas special which was filmed in London. Although I have to admit I was extremely nervous - to sing with a legend is pretty scary and we sang live to a track. But on the day of filming Bing was so wonderful and supportive to me and when he started to sing it was so thrilling. I just really enjoyed the experience and thought how lucky I was to be working with him. The whole special - including David Bowie, Ron Moody and Stanley Baxter was a very happy experience and the Crosby family were great to work with. I was very sad when shortly after we finished filming Bing died, but very thankful I'd been privileged enough to have, not only met the man, but also sung with him. It will always remain one of my magic memories.

Bing & Twiggy in 1977

From Leonard Maltin - Entertainment Tonight

Sometimes I feel as if I was born out of my time, because I'd much rather listen to Bing Crosby than The Rolling Stones...or even Britney Spears! Then I think about what younger generations are missing by not listening to Bing. He personifies so much that's missing from today's entertainment world—ease, grace, charm, and of course, class. That he sang so beautifully, and introduced so many wonderful songs, is icing on the cake. I do feel lucky that I got to see him in person, on Broadway, with many of you sharing the stage in 1976. He couldn't have been more gracious or endearing. It's an evening I will never forget. We are all fortunate that so much of Bing's work survives, from radio, television, movies, and recordings. That means that no matter how tastes may change, he will always be there for someone to discover. And oh, what a discovery they will have in store!

With admiration and respect…

From Gerald Ford

President of the United States 1974-1976

Dear Friends:

It is with immense pleasure that I send centenary

birthday greetings to the Crosby Family and to Gonzaga University in memory of my friend, Bing Crosby. Bing and his wife generously loaned some of their cherished sculptures to adorn the tables at a State Department banquet honoring Prime Minister and Mrs. Yitzhak Rabin of Israel in 1976. In 1977, I enjoyed the company of Bing at his annual Pro-Am Golf Tournament in the first year that his tournament re-opened to women since 1939.

Bing Crosby was a unique American - talented, humble, generous with his time and resources, especially for the fighting troops during World War II. His legacy of song will continue well into the 21st Century, and I'm pleased to count myself among his friends.

From Jack Nicklaus

Growing up, I was a Bing Crosby fan who *loved* his music. For as long as I can remember, I had wanted to play in the Crosby Pro-Am, particularly after I won the U.S. Amateur at Pebble Beach and fell in love with the golf course. So, my first year on Tour when I played The Crosby, I was pretty excited, to say the least!

Meeting and getting to know Bing was a big thrill for me, and as time went on, Barbara and I always enjoyed renewing our friendship with Bing and his family when we returned to Pebble Beach for the tournament. Bing became one of our original Captains Club members at Muirfield Village Golf Club, and years later, his son Nathaniel worked with me when we started the Nicklaus Golf Equipment Company.

I have to admit that one of my most embarrassing moments in golf occurred with Bing during The Crosby back in the mid-1960s. That year, my birthday fell during the tournament. A friend of mine—John Swanson—phoned me at the hotel and said, *"Happy Birthday, Jack. I have somebody else here who would like to say hello and wish you a happy birthday."* That "somebody" came on the line and started crooning a slow, smooth version of "Happy Birthday." I had been getting ready to head out to the golf course, and I guess I was more than a little distracted when I took the call, because I had absolutely no clue who was singing. When the serenade ended, I asked in the clipped tone of a brusque twenty-five-year-old: *"To whom am I speaking, please? "*

"Oh, it's Bing Crosby, Jack...happy birthday! I guess maybe I was a little hoarse."

Needless-to-say, I was mortified and speechless, but as gracious as Bing was, it didn't seem to phase him, and we became good friends. I'll never forget it though—and I'll never forget Bing.

From Beverly Garland

What a wonderful time I had being Bing Crosby's wife on the Bing Crosby Show.

The year that we did the show he never ceased to amaze me. I would study far into the night to learn my lines, and when I would walk in the morning he would say "Well what do we say today?" I would hand him the script. He would look it over and that was that.. he knew the lines!

Beverly Garland with her TV family in 1964.

There was a piano on the set and Buddy Cole was there every day to play. Bing knew the words to every song he had ever sung and those he had not. He sang every day and what a treat it was for all of us. He had perfect pitch and a quick sense of humor. When there was a break he practiced his golf on the set. It was his passion!

He amused and delighted us all. There will never be another Bing and I will always miss him. Thank you for letting me be part of your celebration

From Don Babcock, Jimmy Van Heusen's nephew

It is with pleasure that my family and I extend our best wishes as the world celebrates the 100th birthday of Bing Crosby. My uncle, Jimmy Van Heusen, who was a very close friend of Bing's for many years, would be pleased to know Bing is being honored on this auspicious occasion. My uncle's long-term relationship with Bing began when he was "summoned" to Hollywood from New York City by Paramount Pictures to work on the "Road" pictures. Being a pilot as well as a songwriter, he flew his own plane to the West Coast, following the major roads along the way - after all, it was the early 1940s! After establishing himself with new lyric-writing partner Johnny Burke, my uncle ended up moving into a home next door to Bing.

Many folks now know of the odd Bing Crosby/John Kennedy connection. It was an odd connection for Jimmy Van Heusen at first glance, too, for being raised in a very conservative Republican Methodist home, people would not have pictured him as a supporter of Mr. Kennedy, just as Bing wasn't readily seen as a supporter either. However, when the President stayed at Bing's home on three different occasions, my uncle had

the "luck" of having his house used by the Secret Service men assigned to the President - as I mentioned, he DID live next door!

Jimmy Van Heusen was a bachelor for many, many years. He told me stories of how his "dates" would always make Bing blush, as many of these women were NOT quite the "society ladies" other celebrities would squire about town! When Bing was widowed in 1952, and since most of Bing's friends were married, my uncle, still the bachelor, found the time to spend with Bing that some others weren't always able to give - he told me that Bing appreciated his companionship during those sad times before he found happiness and married again five years later. My uncle himself didn't marry until 1968 and Bing was one of his many well wishers on that occasion!

I'm pleased that my uncle was open with his stories about his deep affection and respect for Bing Crosby, and in his name, I again send my family's greetings on Bing Crosby's centenary.

Gold Records

Your Editor learned from Richard Grudens' new book about Glenn Miller (see *Books 'N' Bing*) that the first Gold Record was presented by RCA Victor to Glenn Miller on February 10, 1942 for his recording of 'Chattanooga Choo Choo' which had become the first million selling record for 15 years. As we know, all of the other record companies soon followed suit and Bing received Gold Records for his singles from Decca for:

1. Sweet Leilani.
2. New San Antonio Rose.
3. White Christmas.
4. Silent Night.
5. Sunday Monday or Always.
6. Pistol Packin' Mama (with the Andrews Sisters).
7. Jingle Bells (with the Andrews Sisters).
8. I'll Be Home for Christmas.
9. Swinging on a Star.
10. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral.
11. Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters).
12. I Can't Begin to Tell You.
13. McNamara's Band.
14. South America Take It Away (with the Andrews Sisters).
15. Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson).
16. Whiffenpoof Song.
17. Now Is the Hour (Maori Farewell Song).
18. Galway Bay.
19. Dear Hearts and Gentle People.
20. Play a Simple Melody (with Gary Crosby).
21. Sam's Song (with Gary Crosby).

and from Capitol for:

22. True Love (with Grace Kelly).

It was not until 1958, that the Recording Industry Association of America (the RIAA®) set up an official system which transformed the euphemism "Gold Record" into a formalised process honouring recording artists who achieve extraordinary success. On March 14, 1958, the year the awards were launched, the RIAA® awarded the very first Gold plaque to Perry Como for his hit single, "Catch A Falling Star" (RCA Records). Four months later, the cast album to "Oklahoma!" sung by Gordon Macrae (Capitol Records) became the first official Gold® album. Fueled in part by the disco craze, the volume of music sales and Gold awards skyrocketed by the mid-1970s, prompting the RIAA® to introduce the Platinum® award category in 1976, for sales of one million albums. By the mid-1980s, the recording industry was enjoying another boom, this time from the introduction of the CD, and the RIAA® instituted Multi-Platinum™ awards for sales of 2 million or more.

Johnny Taylor's "Disco Lady" was the first Platinum® single. The first Platinum™ album certified by the RIAA® was The Eagles' "Their Greatest Hits 1971-1975". And now, that album has reached over 26 million copies, becoming the best-selling album of the 20th century. Michael Jackson's "Thriller", which was one of the first Multi-Platinum™ albums ever certified, held the top album slot from 1984 until his record was tied and then eventually broken in 1999.

On March 16, 1999, the RIAA® launched the Diamond® Awards, honoring sales of 10 million copies or more of an album or single.

Of course, all these developments post-date Bing's peak years but on November 13, 1970, his album "Merry Christmas" was certified as a "gold" album having achieved $1 million in sales based on the manufacturer's wholesale price. According to the RIAA web site (www.riaa.com), Bing's only other RIAA certified million-seller is the Reader's Digest compilation "Bing Sings" which was certified as Multi-Platinum™ on April 28, 1998 having sold over 2 million units. By then, multi-box sets had been redefined as two or more CDs (or the equivalent in LPs or cassettes) with a minimum running time of 120 minutes. The criteria had been changed so that each unit within a set is counted separately. The criteria for a Gold® multi-box set now require sales of 500,000 units; Platinum®, one million units; and Multi-Platinum™, two million units. So the 'Bing Sings' set which comprised eight LPs would have had to have sold about 250,000 copies to qualify which is remarkable for what was quite an expensive set.

In 1963, Bing contributed the song 'Tower Of Babel' to a long-playing record called *Three Billion Millionaires*, the proceeds from which were for the United Nations Children's Fund. He was presented with a gold record for this but again the RIAA does not have details.

Brian Weber did some research into this subject generally and on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum earlier this year he commented as follows:

> "None of Bing's gold records are RIAA certified. I'm not quite sure if that's because they weren't submitted for RIAA certification (they do have to be submitted) or if it's because Decca/MCA/Universal didn't retain the sales figures or what. They do have to be able to PROVE that a record sold a million copies — it's independently audited. They also have to pay a fee for each and every record, whether it be a single or an album, submitted for certification: $350 per record. So if Universal were to have Bing's 22 Decca gold records certified, the fee would be over $4,000, PLUS they'd have to pay the travel

expenses for the RIAA auditor (says it right on their web site), which is located in Washington D.C., not to mention what it would cost to pay their employees to dig out 60 year-old sales records, if they even still exist. It's not likely to happen."

Certainly some record companies are very keen to have their issues certified and RCA is one of them. Their artist, Elvis Presley, is now certified as the biggest selling solo artist in U.S. history and RCA continue to submit little-known records by Elvis for certification, most of which were not hits at the time. Perhaps if such tracks are included on compilation albums they can be counted.

All of this indicates how difficult it is to push Bing's claims forward because so much of his success predates the formation of the RIAA and as such has not been certified. But with so many compilations of his greatest hits having been issued, a vast number of his songs must easily qualify for inclusion in the RIAA lists. However, as Brian Weber says, it's just not going to happen, which is a shame. However we can safely say that Bing was the biggest seller of the pre-rock era without fear of contradiction.

Malcolm Macfarlane

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Lorne Harasen, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

I watched the *Larry King Live - Bing Crosby Remembered* show and I'm going to respond to that interview since the Spring issue of BING magazine devotes some considerable space to the program. At the time I was irked by the so called question King directed at Mary Frances which asked why Bing's "legend hadn't carried like Presley's and Sinatra's." I should say that Mr. King certainly brings the high and mighty to his program but for the most part that's all you can say for it. I have never been impressed with King's depth or skill. He fawns over those he fears or likes and only attempts to probe those guests he knows won't turn the tables on him or fight back. If I were assigning an interviewer for a key story or guest, Larry King would not be my choice. I say that with all due respect to him as a person. He is fine with light stuff like Hedda Hopper or Ann Landers but a Dan Rather he is not!

To begin with King didn't ask a question. He expressed an opinion about the carrying of a "legend" which he tried to disguise as a question. And to whom did he direct this so called question? He asked it of a child of Bing Crosby. Mary Frances must be commended for maintaining her composure and for responding with poise. It seems to me that if you assume the role of determining who is or isn't a "legend" you ought to know why it hasn't carried. Frankly, what purpose does such a question serve in a forum aimed at "remembering." If there is an over-used word on *Larry King Live* it has to be the word "legend" which is applied to everyone these days from Bugs Bunny to Ross Perot.

In my opinion Frank Sinatra is worthy of the legend label if I understand what that means but I would not mention Elvis Presley's name in the same breath. Not once but countless times Sinatra credited Bing Crosby for paving the way for crooners and he was not the only crooner to do so. Quite apart from fans the world over there is something to be said about the regard of your peers and Bing had those in spades. While Bing had a fondness for the grape in those early years he recognized the tendency and did something about it in a resolute way. He didn't "punch out" or threaten writers he didn't like nor did he keep company with questionable associates. Crosby didn't resort to drugs or balloon to weights of ridiculous and dangerous proportions and he showed up for performances. He had but two wives. One who tragically died at a very young age and another who remains devoted to him to this day.

Bing's idea of fun was taking a son or two to a ball game or fishing or to the golf course. He remained true to his church to his dying day and he helped more causes and people than you can count. As Jimmy Carter said, Bing was "a good man." These traits and practises don't make news and thus the Larry King "question." Crosby was a titan and remains the greatest performer in my lifetime. I'm grateful that we have his music, his movies and his radio and television programs and he comes to us brand new every Christmas, year after year. Talk about a "legend" carried! Which religious feast day or patriotic observance or sport is associated with Frank Sinatra or Elvis Presley.....or Larry King?

Shirley Naylor, Orange, NSW, Australia.

I am an ex-member of Bingang/Club Crosby from 1949 to 2003, 54 years, which was to me was like a lifetime, and it is hard to realize it's all over.....so now a new start with the *International Club Crosby.*

Enjoyed my first issue (Winter) and now the Spring and would like to comment on the following articles in the latter.

"Our Man in Sydney," Malcolm's trip down under and the meal outdoors would be quite different. By the way, did you learn the Aussie salute? It was great to see what you both look like and also to see Alan Morton, with whom I corresponded earlier. It makes things much easier when writing when one knows what folk look like. It was also great to see Gord Atkinson of Canada. I wrote to him years ago. A trip back in time, really!

Grahame Pascoe's article on *Dr. Rhythm*, which I have never managed to see. He lives only 45 minutes from Orange, and as you more than likely know, has a radio programme on Bathurst 2MCE FM, and I get to hear Bing!

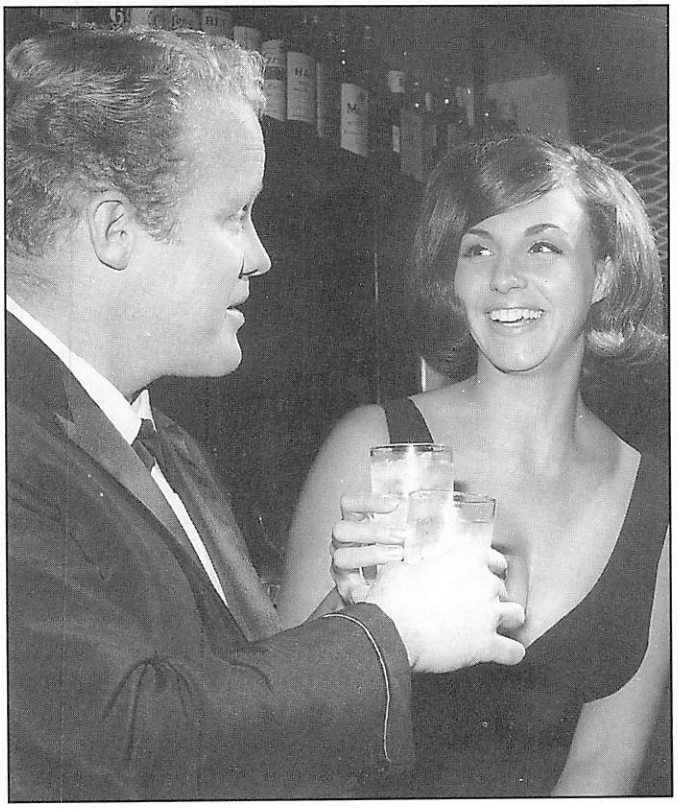
Had a good laugh about the neighbour from hell; they are everywhere. Always like to read about the second family on the box - "Bing Remembered" — with comments by

Nathaniel and Mary Frances to say that they didn't keep his memory alive. Gary's book did a lot of damage as did *The Hollow Man*. Elvis, Frank and Dean are heard quite a lot, and Bing just seems to be the forgotten man!. I rang our local station 2GZ and had my head bitten off and have never heard a disc of his played, not even at Christmas, as they always have others singing "White Christmas," though I did hear it in the loo at a shopping centre at Christmas time!!

Gonzaga has a wonderful museum, and of course his statue with the pipe always going amiss, plus Kathy's comments. I haven't been able to get her latest book here and not for the want of trying. "The Man Who Would Be Bing," about Mike Holliday, who did really sound like Bing. I only have one disc of his, and that is "Rooney-Oh," which he sang as the soundtrack from the film *Rooney* with Barry Fitzgerald in 1958.

Was very saddened to hear about Phillip's death, with none of the first family left. I saw all of the films he and his brothers appeared in and have an 8 x 10 of them in PJs, with a baseball bat, from *Duffy's Tavern*. (1945).

It was fitting that Priscilla Koernig should write her article "My Friend Phil," as she knew the whole family for many years, never missed Bing's golf tournaments or his concerts, and the same with the boys, as was mentioned. I was a member of the Boys' Club from start to finish and was sent an 8 x 10 of them, personally autographed, also two small snaps from *Sergeants 3* when they were younger. I wrote to Paramount and was sent stills of them, also bought photos of them and of Bing, Kathy, and their children. Phil came out to Australia in the later 60s to produce TV shows, but nothing came of it. I am enclosing a photo, that I had copied, taken whilst he was here in Australia. I don't know who the lady is. It was taken in Melbourne, as an article from *TV Week* said.



It's regrettable that Phil or Gary didn't do duets with Bing like Natalie Cole did with her dad. My sympathy is extended to Phil's family. Cheerio to all the members, and I look forward to future magazines.

(Editor: It's great to hear from Shirley whom I have been aware of for many years. To those who don't know, the Aussie salute is defined as the act of moving the hand around to flick off or drive away flies, particularly from the face. We learnt the technique pretty quickly at Ayers Rock. We even bought nets to go over our faces too!)

Stan White, Northamptonshire, UK

The feature in BING #136 titled, "Bing's First Record", is very interesting and well researched from the technical viewpoint, however I would like to add my thoughts on this subject. To start with we know exactly where the recordings were made which of course includes the unreleased track. "Don't Somebody Need Somebody", because you name the location as a converted warehouse at Sixth and Bixel in Los Angeles in your book, "Day By Day". Bing also mentions the "abandoned warehouse" when talking on his musical autobiography recordings.

No doubt exists at all that it is an early Columbia electrical recording, a system which Columbia and other record companies had been experimenting with for some years. Cutting the grooves electrically had been done as far back as 1923, if not earlier, but the problem was that they were using carbon granule microphones to pick up the sounds (much the same as used in the domestic telephone for many years) so that the recorded sound was no better than the acoustic horn method of recording. Then, as soon as someone decided to use the magnetic type of microphone as used in those early radio days, hey presto - the problem was solved. 78 rpm (revolutions per minute) was the standard reproduction speed for shellac records throughout the world from when electrical recording came in. However to start with, there were variations such as Columbia often giving a playing speed of 80 rpm, this mainly coming from American Columbia, who distributed 80 rpm metal parts to their offices throughout the world. Columbia in the UK and Australia were using 78 rpm as standard practise.

The metal parts for, "I've Got The Girl", were at 80 rpm world-wide. As noted for many years, "I've Got The Girl" was certainly not recorded at 80 rpm or 78 rpm. The article in the Spring 2004 edition of BING suggests it was recorded at 70.5 rpm and this might well be true, but why? Certainly not to jazz up the tempo, because the bandleader could have handled that situation by having the band play faster. The label for, "I've Got The Girl", whether credited to Don Clark and his Hotel Biltmore Orchestra, or to The Charleston Serenaders, clearly states that the recording is a Fox Trot. But, as released to play at 80 rpm, dancers would be doing a greyhound race instead of a Fox Trot—running around the ballroom in fact! It is a dance band record, obviously it was played at the correct Fox Trot tempo, and Bing and Al would have used their normal singing voices, so what happened?

Unfortunately, there is no way of now knowing the details of the recording equipment used, but one thing is obvious, it was recorded at the wrong speed, turning a Fox Trot into a Greyhound Race. Was the recording equipment switched to the wrong recording speed by mistake - I doubt that. Did the local electricity supply fail to feed full power to the recording equipment - I doubt it. I reckon that the recording engineer got it into his head that the number might over run the allocated playing time for a ten inch record running at 80 rpm, so he slowed the speed of the turntable to about 70 rpm, to make sure he captured the whole performance. The same might have

happened to the other unreleased number, it probably sounded so bad that they dare not release it? Incidentally, by playing the recording slowed down to a Fox Trot tempo, the orchestra and singers sound quite all right. If you know better, write to our Editor.

(Editor: Stan may well have something and this does seem a logical explanation for this curious matter. Stan has sent me a tape of "I've Got The Girl" slowed to 70 rpm and it certainly sounds better. The Fox Trot was never something I could master but even at 70 rpm it would have been something of dash around the ballroom.)

Keith Parkinson, St. Helens, UK

I've eventually read BING 136. Once again it is a well balanced magazine. To pick out highlights gives the impression that some articles are not worthy of mention. This is not the case, but a couple of writers increased my knowledge of Bing in the current issue. Wayne Martin's piece on master recordings gave on insight into an unexplored area of Bing's recording legacy. Lionel Pairpoint's welcome return to the pages of the magazine built on the information he has already unearthed for his "...And Here's Bing" study. Lionel's article confirms my view that it is always worthwhile going into print once most of the facts are available. To wait until research is complete means that the day never comes when an author feels his has got it all together. And as we know, there is always something of Bing's waiting to be discovered.

The Bill Morrow correspondence revealed a lot about Bing the man as opposed the public image Bing so skilfully projected. He must have invisibly steered several projects to a conclusion without taking credit.

Please keep readers up to date with the HLC Properties Limited legal action.

George Patmore, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, UK

I'm leisurely reading through the BING magazine, Spring edition, and have reached the article on Bing's correspondence to Bill Morrow. You innocently asked why Bing referred to Bill as 'Izaak'. This, I feel sure, will result in every ICC angling fanatic putting pen to paper, or digit to e-mail keyboard! Add the surname 'Walton' and check on the Internet to discover that Izaak Walton was an expert on fishing and renowned for his book "The Compleat Angler" which was published in 1653. His cottage is still open to the public in Swallowfield in Staffordshire. No, I'm not an angler, don't even have access to the net (fishing or otherwise), just a gatherer of useless information.

(Editor: Thanks, George. Obvious when you know! Roger Osterholm was another to write, but they were the only two.)

Michael Winspear, Coventry, UK

I have been re-reading the old BING magazines from way back and came upon this little gem which may be of use for the BING magazine. In "BING 72" of June 1974, there was an article mentioning how Ray Milland was at The Cocoanut Grove when the Sunday Night at The Cocoanut Grove was presented. To quote Ray,

> "Sunday night at the Grove happened once a month and the place would be lousy with celebrities fighting all for a chance to get up and do a little entertaining. Gus Arnheim's was the orchestra with his vocal group the Rhythm Boys. Grace Moore sang "Mimi" and W. C. Fields juggled three cigar boxes. The third and most moving happening of the night was the final one. I thought it was an odd choice until I remembered it was Sunday. One of the Rhythm Boys, the blonde and lackadaisical one named Bing Crosby, stepped up to the microphone and in a surprisingly fine baritone started Gounod's "Ave Maria." Immediately there was a complete hush; not a plate was moved. It is not a long piece and is usually reprised. When he came to the reprise I heard a soprano softly drift in from a table near the stage; towards the end, both voices came in full, and when they had finished the hush remained. I looked at Asher but he was transported. Then the roar started; chairs were pushed back and people stood and the applause was deafening. It was so emotional. The soprano was Lily Pons."

Having read this story at least twice, I am rather puzzled. Being a bit of a chorister as well as a singer of Bing's songs to the older generation, I know the Gounod "Ave Maria." It is based on the Bach chorale "Meditation" and is quite a long, complete piece, not requiring a reprise. However, if the piece Bing sang was the *Schubert* "Ave Maria," which has had many performances by a number people such as Caruso, John McCormack, Mario Lanza and Pavarotti, as well as others (details from "The Chronological Bing Crosby" part 3) - the whole song is sometimes repeated as a reprise. I am wondering if any of our members have any details about this. Bing certainly sang the Schubert "Ave Maria" in 1944 during the filming of "Going My Way," and recorded it on April 5th and July 30th 1945 - the first take being rejected.

There is another detail which I am not sure about. Bing is not normally known for his great range of voice and the Gounod "Ave Maria" has quite a large range of notes. Did Bing ever sing this song or was Ray Milland as accurate in his naming of the song as we have been led to believe? Not that I am saying that Ray was wrong, just that I *believe* he may have been mistaken in the composer of the piece. Does anyone have any comments on this?

(Editor: I think that it is probably unlikely that anyone can shed any light on this but who knows? My own view is that the ghost-writer of Ray Milland's book probably didn't even realise that there was another version of "Ave Maria". But perhaps I am being cynical.)

Mike Kaptanis, Yonkers, New York, USA

Having heard almost all of Bing's recordings from the first to the last, I would say the pivotal year in Bing's career was 1933. His voice matured slightly as a baritone, but he was able to hit the high notes with power. He was fortunate to be singing in the era of the great composers, a great style of music, and fine orchestras such as Jimmie Grier, John Scott Trotter, and others. Many singers when interviewed would acknowledge whose style influenced them most. Where Bing may have admired Al Jolson as a great entertainer, it was Louis Armstrong who invoked in Bing the phrasing and feeling for jazz that was present in his songs. There has never been a singer with Bing's versatility. Who else could sing "Shine" and then "Sweet Leilani" with as much feeling as our Bing?

(Editor: I can only agree wholeheartedly with Mike's last sentence. Many people have picked June 1933 as being the peak of Bing's recording career whilst many others plump for June 1939. But this is a debate which has been going on for years and much depends when you first heard Bing and your

personal tastes.)

Norman Wolfe, Cumming, Georgia, USA

I have recently put together a great tape using, among other things, Bing's sound track versions of 'My Melancholy Baby', 'Moonlight Becomes You' and 'Too Romantic'. These versions are so much better than the Decca recordings. Why oh why wouldn't the Kapps let him noodle around with that stuff once in a while.

Why were Bing's soundtrack versions often better than his commercial recordings? Well, I have a theory about that. First of all, he had the advantage of miming to playback which the movies finally got right around the mid-30's, about the time of *Pennies From Heaven*. With that in place, he could do just about anything he wanted and he had the advantage of looking at himself and matching gesture to phrase, a far more intimate process than recording, and, of course, as he made one movie after another, he could see what worked well visually and vocally. This probably made him far more conscientious when pre-recording his soundtrack songs.

Secondly (and these brilliant thoughts are not actually in order) he had less of a time constraint. Recordings in those days were what—2 and a half to three minutes—a chorus and a half and a musical bridge, which tended to make them formulaic. Also, musical bridges don't play well in films so he had to fill up the time either with visual actions or noodling, sometimes both. Directors in the early days seemed to fear shooting an entire song without cutting away from the singer to show various scenes such as women listening or somebody clowning. Can you believe what they did to 'Blue Hawaii' with Martha Raye fooling around. Help!

Thirdly, he didn't have Dave Kapp hollering at him every time he deviated from the melody. Why didn't he holler back when he was big enough to do so? Probably because he wanted to get it all over with. What he was doing was selling, why fool with it?

Fourth - he couldn't rush through the movie sequences as he often did the record sessions. No one take Crosby baloney. Too many dollars at stake.

'My Melancholy Baby' and 'Moonlight Becomes You' are classic examples. The commercially released recordings are fine, a singer in full command getting on with it, smoothly and effortlessly. On the other hand, the movie soundtracks are absolutely superb, freewheeling, humming, whistling. I know of no other singer who could have made that countermelody approach to 'Melancholy Baby' work, particularly that first chorus which is sung to a guitar background. If you listen to Jolson sing 'Melancholy Baby' and then Bing's version, you would ask yourself, "is this the same song?"

If you compare, 'This Is My Night To Dream', you find much the same although the recorded version is better in approach to 'Melancholy Baby' or 'Moonlight Becomes You'. But the sound track is memorable.

Going His Way Is a Nation's Habit After Twenty Years of Crosby Song

A copy of *NEWSWEEK* magazine for January 28, 1946 has found its way into our hands and underneath the headline above was a fascinating article which we have great pleasure in reproducing with acknowledgements to *NEWSWEEK*.

"Don't worry about Bing," Bob Hope prophesied. "He is the man who made Sinatra's mother swoon. And, in 1960, he'll be the man who will make Sinatra's daughter swoon." Never one to knock down a friend's gag, in a year when The Voice seemed secure in a triumphant reign of adolescent hysteria, Crosby proceeded to run up these 1945 addenda to an already incredible record:

- He knocked off the astonishing total of $400,000 in record royalties.
- He won Yank magazine's GI poll as the person who had done most for the morale of overseas servicemen.
- He was named by newspaper radio editors, in polls by both Motion Picture Daily-Fame and Radio Daily, as the nation's No. 1 male vocalist—although he was on the air only about five months of the twelve.
- He ambled up to receive an Oscar for "Going My Way" (1944).
- He was named by the country's movie exhibitors as top money-making star - a first he also won in 1944.

For these chores alone, Crosby easily made more than $1,000,000 - and that's ignoring the income from Crosby-owned real estate, investments, and securities, or the Bing Crosby Productions, Inc.., producers of "The Great John L." That was last year. With record production stepping into high gear, "The Bells of St. Mary's" just released, the Crosby-Hope "Road to Utopia" due in March, and any number of new radio programs ready and waiting when and if the Kraft Music Hall suit is settled (NEWSWEEK, Jan. 14), 1946 promises bigger and better Bingo.

Man and voice, Bing Crosby is unique. If the boy from Tacoma and Spokane, Wash., is not the singer heard most all over the world, then let the challenger prove his claim. Some 75,000,000 Crosby records have spun round and round at home, on the air, and in the jukebox. Add to that the uncountable millions who have heard his quivering tonsils on the air or in the movie house.

In spite of it all, Bing is still the guy who called himself The Groaner and who used to say: "Baloney, I'm just another baritone with a gravel throat." This is not a pose - or people would have believed him long before now, for he has been in the music and entertainment business for at least twenty years. Although at 41 (or is it 44?) the Crosby dome is balder and the Crosby face a

little thinner and more lined, the Crosby voice is at its peak and the Crosby charm was never used to better advantage.

Personally, Bing is the man nobody knows but who is everybody's best friend. He can deliver the best brush in all Hollywood or Tin Pan Alley. Trying to get to him when he is not in the mood, which is almost always, is like beating your head against an air mattress. He has often said that with the record, movie, and radio mediums at his disposal he needs publicity about as much as he needs a hole in his head. All he feels he owes his public is his best performance - not a look into his bedroom.

Nor is the investor advised to buy much stock in that legend about Crosby the Casual Character who doesn't like to work. He just knows how to relax, a trait not commonly noticed in singers and actors. What they call temperament, he probably thinks is a waste of energy and time. When he doesn't like something planned for him, he often just doesn't show. Ordinarily, his movie make-up problems are as simple as gluing on his toupee. But let a scene arise which he doesn't think suited to him, and Crosby somehow never gets his make-up on right.

What prompts him to wear a mixture of hunting attire and Hawaiian beachwear is undetermined. Some say it's because he's color blind; others claim he is making mock of Hollywood. In any event, his sartorial informality has eased the tension in many recording sessions and radio broadcasts. His clothes are now a trademark, becoming to him alone.

The Crosby brand of banter developed early out of a dislike for clichés. "Let's wow 'em" was never for him. "Crumple the folks" is the Crosby style.

Song as in Shower: Around 1932, when Bing struck it big with twenty weeks at the New York Paramount and a starring role in "The Big Broadcast," he brought three members of the Crosby clan in to form Bing Crosby, Ltd., Inc.. Brother Everett is business manager; Brother Larry is public-relations head; and Pop is general liaison. Mother Kate reigns supreme as general watchdog and constant reminder of the family's Roman Catholic conscience. But anybody who doesn't think Bing is still making his own big decisions has been playing the market again on the Casual Character.

Musically, Bing is just as extraordinary. His ear and memory for music are almost unbelievable; his rhythm, phrasing, and pitch beyond reproach. He has an easy two-octave reach but seldom uses it as people who like to sing his songs couldn't if he did. "Bing sings," said Dinah Shore, "like all people think they sing in a shower." He can sing everything - and to everybody's taste - from the "Ave Maria" to "Your Socks Don't Match."

Composers say he always sings their songs the way they intended them to be sung - and often at first sight. This facility once prompted John Scott Trotter, the Kraft Music Hall maestro, to warn a colleague: "Only play it once - - he hears so quickly that the second time through he starts improvising."

Nor has Crosby ever forgotten that singing is his business. Where other men, in the careless rapture of movie stardom, might have wanted to play Romeo, he balks at any role out of character. And as for living or dying over the next gag, he can't see it. "I'm not a comedian," he says, "I'm a musician."

Staying on top in a business where radio and the movies can turn yesterday's star into today's has-been is not simple. To see that Crosby stays safely ahead of the Sinatras, the Perry Comos, and the Joe Gargles of tomorrow, he and a trusted circle of advisers devote much time, thought, and energy toward two steady music mediums: the songs he puts on records, and the songs he sings in movies.

Flying Down to Decca: Bing makes records as you eat steak - with relish, and no apparent effort. For proof, join NEWSWEEK in a three-hour Crosby-Eddie Condon session in Decca's Studio A in New York.

It was January 15. The old studio clock had just struck 3 p.m. Condon's barefoot-boys-with-shoes-on were on hand but showing visible signs of strain at the early hour. Decca types hustled — keeping a sharp eye on the door. At about 3:15 the Crosby arrived. Stripped of his bright yellow scarf, tweed coat, and inner-lined battle jacket, he was left naked in a brown felt hat, bright red checked shirt, brown slacks, and the sort of shoe ordinarily seen in the Alps at this time of year. Came 3:45, and in rushed Condon. No taxis, he said.

Condon accompanies Bing at their recording session.

"Blue and Broken-Hearted," the first number to be waxed, didn't go so well. A large blue screen-like sound absorber stood between Bing and the boys. Kicking it aside, he commented: "Got to see if anybody's alive out there." Another run-through or two and, at his question:

"Will this be the deathless disk? Shall we, men?" the side joined history.

"After You've Gone," went rather quickly. Although trouble loomed when Jack Kapp, president of Decca and Crosby adviser-extraordinary on record policy, walked in and asked if "Wild Bill" Davison's trumpet ought to stay so dirty. "You go back to the board of directors if you make one more remark," Crosby said. "I've flown these boys in at great expense. Eddie flew in without a plane."

The clock was falling away from 5 when the group assailed "Personality," a sock potential from "Road to Utopia." Since Dorothy Lamour sings it in the picture, Bing had never seen the music. But no matter. He smoked his pipe ("the kinda singing I do, you can't hurt your voice"), achieved one of his rare grimaces at what he called NEWSWEEK'S "nostril shots", and the side was done. Exit the Crosby - fast.

When Kapp started Decca in 1934, Crosby was his first artist. In return for a contract which runs until 1950, Bing gets a record royalty which about doubles that made by any other artist for any company. Most royalties run to 2½ cents a disk; his run to 4 and a half cents. By a rough average, he records fifteen to twenty times a year, making from two to five disks each time. Releases are planned for him sometimes three years in advance, and a stockpile of at least 50 records is always around in case of emergency.

When Kapp signed Crosby, he was determined to make him the most versatile singer the business had ever known. As a result, there are Crosby Hawaiian songs, cowboy songs, Irish songs, operettas, ballads, patriotic items, hymns, and hot jazz. Some of them he had to be coaxed into doing, and for others, led by the nose.

When Kapp wanted him to record "Silent Night," for example, he said it was a song strictly for Lily the Pons. Persuaded only after he had heard himself and had demanded that all royalties from it go into a charitable fund, he has watched it sell 1,800,000 copies and become No. 2 on his all-time best-seller list. "White Christmas" with a 2,500,000 sale is No. 1, and "Sweet Leilani," of all things, is No. 3.

Twins Behind Bing: Back of the songs Bing sings are Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen, Crosby's Gold Dust Twins. If they had written no other songs for Bing than those in "Going My Way," that alone would justify their place in the Inner Circle. The album has sold more than 750,000 copies; "Swinging on a Star" won the Academy Award, and hardly a week passes that some priest or parson doesn't ask permission to use the lyrics in a sermon or a religious article or book.

The Gold Dust Twins, however, have also knocked off such hard-to-handle problems as the "Roads" to Zanzibar and Morocco, the current "Bells of St. Mary's," and the forthcoming "Road to Utopia." At one time recently, they were working on five pictures at once, including J. Arthur Rank's "London Town," which is now being filmed in England. That period, they say, brought on their first nervous breakdown. Last week, as they were putting the final touches to their new Broadway show, "Nellie Bly," they were in the middle of a second collapse.

Burke, an ASCAP AA (top-classification) lyricist, entered the Crosby career in 1936. Bing liked Burke's words for "Annie Doesn't Live Here Any More" and arranged for him to do "Pennies From Heaven." Van Heusen joined up in 1940, having already collaborated with Burke on "Imagination" and the Benny-Allen picture, "Love Thy Neighbor."

Although Crosby has never turned down a Burke and Van Heusen ditty, Burke admits that it is not always easy to keep the lyrics keyed to the Crosby style. "Moonlight Becomes You" and "A Pocketful of Dreams" as phrases were both directly inspired by Der Bingle's easy talk. To show how delicate a problem 'Swinging on a Star" was, fancy yourself being told by Hollywood to write the Ten Commandments in jazz. Baffled, Van Heusen simply titled his melody "The Way of the Transgressor."

Johnny Burke (left) with Jimmy Van Heusen

Burke is 37, Van Heusen 32. Both, like Crosby, are losing their hair. Both, like Crosby, are elusive. Van Heusen's real name is Edward Chester Babcock, but he chose his professional name as a 14-year-old in Syracuse, N. Y., in order to avoid his father's ire when he sang on the local radio. Any resemblance to the collar ad was purely on purpose. During the war he was a test pilot for Lockheed, alternating melody with roaring P-38s. While Van Heusen always appears to view life a trifle gloomily, Burke is the cheery type. A family man, he has a son and twin daughters - "the things you have to do to keep up with Crosby," he says.

Although the Twins are so closely identified with Crosby, they have, as they put it, "a nonexclusive

contract with nobody." But if asked whether Crosby has first call on their talents, they are the first to admit: "Sure, wouldn't you?" A wistful tone enters their collective voice, however, when they discuss their public. "A Mercer song is always by Mercer," they say. "And a Rodgers and Hammerstein song is always by Rodgers and Hammerstein. But a Burke and Van Heusen song is always a Crosby song."

Songs for Sale: Since more money is to be had if you not only write a song but also publish it, Burke and Van Heusen went into Tin Pan Alley for themselves on the strength of the songs from "Going My Way." Burke & Van Heusen, Inc.., is owned five ways: by the Twins, Crosby, Sidney Kornheiser, who handles the professional end, and Edwin H. (Buddy) Morris, who also has a firm of his own in which Bing owns stock.

In addition to these two firms, Crosby also owns part of two others, the income from all four being placed in trust for his four sons - Gary, the twins Dennis and Phillip, and Lindsay. Bing calls them "The Irishers."

The reason for investing in sheet-music publishing may not be readily apparent to the nonprofessional, but when a guy sings a song one night and thousands of people rush out and buy it the next day, not to invest is bad business. Conversely, it is good business for Bing to plug the songs he sings in pictures, especially since his own firms handle them.

In Crosby's case, however, the plugging is not carried to the extremes now followed by some bandleader-publishers. Bing always sings what the public likes. "I entertain people," he says, "so why should I force 'em to listen to some song that I like? I aim to please." Offhand, one would say he does.

(Editor: The article gives us some idea of Bing's fame in 1946 and it's fascinating to read about that January recording session. Most of the songs from it can be heard on the Bing Crosby & Some Jazz Friends *CD [GRP 16032] issued some years ago.)*

Bing in Nashville

Back in April 2003, we noticed the following article in the Nashville City Paper by Bill Traughber, the paper's Sports Correspondent.

In 1943, Nashville was experiencing the effects of World War II, but an upcoming golf event in the city promised excitement. Rationing and shortages were common as Nashvillians did their share to aid the country to victory. The sporting life continued throughout the country and events were staged in an effort to raise money for war bonds.

One of these events occurred on June 2, 1943 at Nashville's Belle Meade Country Club, a golf exhibition featuring entertainer Bing Crosby. A portion of the money raised went for the construction of a submarine chaser that Nashville was building. The boat was being built on a bank of the Cumberland River and was to be donated to the U.S. Navy.

Crosby arrived in Nashville by train after spending a similar day in Chattanooga on the golf links. Joining him in his Nashville foursome at the first tee were PGA President Ed Dudley, Byron Nelson, the No. 1 professional golfer at that time, and Adrian C. McManus, who was Nashville's city champion.

Belle Meade's pro, George Livingstone and Billy Conn, the No. 1 professional boxing contender, were on hand to act as referees for the match. Crosby was teamed with Dudley opposing Nelson and McManus. The Tennessean gave this preview for the anticipated crowds:

> "They'll be there to see Bing test his golf prowess against the master shotmaking of Nelson; they'll be there to glimpse or perhaps get a friendly wink or word from the man who rode to wealth on a song, yet kept his own scuffed oxfords firmly planted humbly right down to earth."

An estimated 5,000 golf enthusiasts were reported to have gathered at the event, with Crosby easily the main attraction. The match started late and was eventually reduced to 15 holes. Nelson paced the group with a front-nine 34 followed by McManus' 38, Dudley's 39 and Crosby's 40.

Crosby's main contention was to please the gallery with his easy swing and good-natured humor. He graciously posed for photographs for newspaper cameramen and the amateurs. It was reported that Crosby took a movie camera away from one "pretty girl" and gave her an impromptu screen test.

On the par-3 second hole, Crosby caught a sand trap, and as he searched his golf bag for the appropriate club he said, "I sure do need ol' Bob Hope's nose to play this shot." Crosby pleased the crowd with body English he exhibited after several shots. His motion was described as resembling a hula dancer from a South Sea island.

The crooner was not the type of golfer that expects silence as he concentrates on a shot. On this day the excited crowd could not control their uproar. On the 11th hole, as he was in the rough, a sound truck drove near him playing one of his recordings over a public address system. He was asked if the truck interfered with his game.

"Not me," said Crosby as he joined in by humming along. As he began to address the ball he quit singing and said, "Gee, I guess I'd better quit, that guy sings better than I do."

Crosby estimated that he had played in over 100 golf exhibitions since the beginning of the war. He was considered a top-flight golfer that usually shoots in the 70s.

"I'd say they have resulted in the sale of 30 million dollars worth of bonds," said Crosby. "It's a lot of fun and I get quite a kick out of playing the different courses."

Raymond Johnson, a sportswriter for the Tennessean wrote:

> "Bing Crosby — he was the one that was chiefly responsible for luring Nashville's record crowd to Belle Meade yesterday — has come and gone. Memories of his crooning linger on. Those who had become Crosby fans through the medium of radio and the silver screen are now more rabid fans than

ever."

Crosby died on Oct. 14, 1977 at age 74. The avid golfer was playing a round at the La Moraleja Golf Club near Madrid, Spain. He just carded an 85 and while leaving the 18th hole for the clubhouse, he collapsed from a massive heart attack. Crosby is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City, Calif.

Bill Traughber

(Editor: Our thanks to the Nashville City Paper and Bill Traughber)

BING ON THE BOX

Bert Bishop is here with his regular look at what's been on TV and radio.

D-DAY, 60 YEARS ON

For what is almost certainly the last time, this major anniversary culminated in both a regal and emotional series of ceremonies set in the townships of the Normandy coastline. With every participating wartime nation represented by heads of State and, most importantly, by surviving veterans, it was a fitting tribute to those fighting men and airborne troops who stormed the beaches and beyond of northern France on Tuesday, 6th June 1944. As we are all aware, thousands of those men never lived to see the fruits of this amazing military operation having paid the ultimate price with their lives. For me the most emotional moment, watching on TV, was at the closing of the Arromanches ceremony where British veterans all well into their eighties, having marched past H.M. The Queen, linked hands and poignantly sang *Auld Land Syne* in what they must have known would be a final get-together. I'm sure that similar scenes took place in the American sector, too, where President George Bush addressed his country's veterans.

In this sixtieth anniversary the wireless was well to the fore in remembering and recalling those dark yet triumphant days. Beyond the serious tributes, music of the time was very much to the fore on the airwaves, none more so than *Gold For Grown Ups* where Paul Barnes was keen to demonstrate that 'there was more to WW2 music than Glenn Miller and Vera Lynn notwithstanding their recognized contribution.' Bing always figures in Paul's Sunday night music-fest and it was odds on that *Hello Mom*, one of Paul Barnes' Crosby favourites, would be played, principally to highlight by the lyrics of the song the significance of American war bonds: *'and the bonds you keep buying that are keeping us flying make the whole darn thing okay'*. On this occasion we heard the first and more spontaneous version which begins *'Hello, mom, I thought I'd 'phone tonight'* as opposed to *'call tonight'* on L3147. Accompanied by Capt. Eddie Dunstedter's band [he also wrote the song along with Frank Loesser and A.V.Jones] this has to be one of the most charming of Bing's war effort recordings.

Less charming, but currently popular at the time, was *Shoo-Fly Pie And Apple Pan Dowdy.* Bing's version from KMH 14th March 1946 found its way on to V-Disc 661-A and has been available for some time now on a 3-CD set of morale boosting ballads and folk songs designated for the combat zones. The war years, too, saw the hey-day of the Andrews Sisters and that 'harmonic

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Brunswick
REGD TRADE MARK
T T
B.F. & Co.
(L.3147)
0510-A
HELLO MOM
(E. Dunstedter, A.V. Jones, F. Loesser)
BING CROSBY
With Capt. E. Dunstedter & his West Coast Army Air Force Training Centre Orchestra
BRUNSWICK LTD.
MADE IN ENGLAND

hamburger' *One Meat Ball,* with interpolations from Bing ['feed it to Frankie'], from KMH 25th January 1945 was another track that had been played earlier on Paul's programme. His entire three hours on the evening of the 6th featured wartime tracks, including bowdlerized versions of well known ditties, monologues - Robb Wilton's 'The Munitions Worker' - as well as the big band swing recordings from many of the famous orchestras of the day including 'Charlie' - alias of Carl Schwedler - the English speaking German orchestra leader who, over the Nazi airwaves, sang parodied versions of popular songs ridiculing Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin! It was a great three-hour programme even if, unfortunately, the first hour was inexplicably lost to some half dozen intended counties Essex included. Also getting in on the act, BBC Radio Derby featured an excerpt from one of Bing's wartime Kraft Music Hall programmes over the D-Day weekend, and Cole Porter's *Don't Fence Me In* was a track by the Old Groaner heard on one of that station's other broadcasts.

Although much of the foregoing has been off topic surely the significance of this last, major anniversary deserves a few words here in recognition of the great debt we owe to our veteran servicemen and women, some of whom are readers of this magazine.

KINGS OF COOL

Subtitled *The Classic Crooners* this BBC1 TV Sunday 11th May documentary, was narrated by 'the silver voice of Honor Blackman' [sic] who is perhaps

best remembered, along with Patrick Macnee, for her black leather-clad role in *The Avengers* and Pussy Galore in *Goldfinger*. The programme featured six of the best of the 20th Century's greatest male singers: Bing; Frank Sinatra; Dean Martin; Nat Cole; Tony Bennett and Andy Williams. We've been fortunate in having any number of documentaries covering Bing's life and career, so here it was good to see him in his rightful place as the first of, and in the company of, the acknowledged great crooners. Many will question that appellation. However, it is a description that has been long established to denote male singers of popular songs born from a spurious corruption of *sotto voce* singing. Interestingly, never applied to a chanteuse!

Described by Miss Blackman as 'The father of crooning' she also credited Bing with writing the first chapter of the American songbook but, incredibly, told us that Bing was born in Illinois! Bing's daughter, Mary, confirmed that her dad changed the way people sang and was later to comment on Bing and Frank's harmonious relationship even though as CQ Editor, Dylan Jones, was to comment; 'Crosby's ratings were so great they were afraid to put Sinatra on the air because they thought it would kill his [Sinatra's] career. Bing was the person who came into your living room through the wireless and it felt like he belonged there as a member of the family.' Singer Michael Bublé said of the first, true super star that 'Bing had got that deep, rich voice that God had given him naturally.' The ubiquitous, and very welcome, Gary Giddins was, as always, on hand to advise the viewers of Bing's extraordinary and unapproachable achievements well beyond the little matter of his being in the top ten, at Christmastime, for sixteen years out of twenty with Irving Berlin's most famous song. Several numbers were featured, briefly, to illustrate, appropriately, the dialogue and along with film clips and still photographs the impact of Bing on the world of entertainment, on records, radio and films, was generously conveyed.

Two classic crooners together

Inevitably, and important to the programme's title, Bing's early years of youthful carousing 'when he was more interested in booze and broads than his voice' had some coverage. No doubt it was felt that it should be noted that Messrs. Sinatra and Martin were not the only ones who were not averse to kicking the gong around even though, unlike Bing, they were to carry this on well into middle age we are led to believe.

This was an important documentary inasmuch as it would have attracted a much larger audience than any one of Bing's normal, solo biographies. Apart from the fact that fans of the other five crooners would have been keen to view the programme, the general viewing public would have been much more likely to have tuned in to such a multi-talented broadcast. Also, it made an important point by the fact the both Mary and Howard Crosby were to dismiss as total nonsense the 'common knowledge' of Gary Crosby's autobiographical accusations about his father.

Bing's eight and a half minutes out of fifty, bearing in mind there were a couple of minutes of general introduction to the programme, was a measure of the importance placed upon the regard in which he is held by Gerard Barry and Matt O'Casey, the Producer and Director. The broadcast time of 10.15 to 11.05 p.m. was just about perfect. For most viewers it would have been the last programme of the evening and more likely to have lingered, and been discussed, as bedtime beckoned. In all, a very welcome addition to our visual library of the Crosby legacy.

THE SONG SHOW

On Sunday the 14th. March, on BBC R2, Russell Davies interviewed ICC member Ken Crossland regarding Ken's forthcoming book, now published, entitled *The Man Who Would Be Bing*. Readers may recall that a similar programme went out on Boxing Day last year, on Saga radio, as reported in these columns of the Spring issue of BING. In conjunction with the book a CD set, *The Story Of My Life*, has also been released. I'm sure that all members will be aware that the subject of the book, CD and programme is none other than Britain's very own Crosby sound-alike Michael Holliday. Whilst following a similar pattern to Saga's broadcast there was a little more of Bing to be heard. Indeed, the programme commenced with the Old Groaner's *Swinging On A Star.* Dean Martin was next up with his 'Fifties release of *If I Could Sing Like Bing* played to illustrate the influence Bing still had on his contemporaries, while Bing's fluffed *Melancholie* [sandwiched between the antepenultimate track, *Margie*, and the closing number that serves as the title for the CD set] was one of the so-called continental tracks recorded in London which session Michael Holliday contrived to attend. This, coupled with the previous Saga programme and a similar, if brief, broadcast on Radio Derby must be the definitive account of a singer blessed with a great talent that shone all too briefly and which, finally, ended in stark tragedy.

SOME CROSBY CRUMBS

BBC Radio 4 has a weekly play on Mondays at 2.15 p.m.. On the 14th June, Pauline Collins and Richard Briers starred in FOREVER MINE, a comedy of relationships. Several times throughout the play Bing's recording of *Love Is The Sweetest Thing* was featured. This was agreeably surprising in that the Al Bowlly / Ray Noble track is usually preferred for background music to British productions, though Bing was not credited at all.

Before playing his next track, **David Jacobs** on his BBC R2 Sunday 'Recollections' programme, recalled a delightfully amusing comment by Russell Davies: 'Every art form has its lowest common denominator, and in the case of jazz it tends to take the shape of a half-a-dozen balding, pot-bellied, middle-aged men squalling away in your local pub drinking as much beer as they can and, at the end of the day, having a much better time than you or I' - "at the other end of the scale we find Cole Porter describing it thus"; cue *Now You Has Jazz.*

Our LA researcher par excellence, **Gary Hamann**, told us about a TV programme about Blue Skies Trailer Park, Palm Springs, Florida. Bing was one of the owners of this trailer park and Huell Howser, who does local travelogue shows on the Public TV station, did an episode devoted to this park. Huell is big stuff locally and his programs are very popular due to his very ingratiating, enthusiastic ways. Gary Hamann came in on the programme halfway through and there were numerous Bing references including one about a person, meeting him at one of his golf tourneys, who said that when Bing found out that he was from the site of Blue Skies, immediately asked if any of the 450 palm trees he planted were still standing (all 450 are reported still there). The programme finished with Bing singing, not unsurprisingly, "Blue Skies"! I know that videotapes of the show are available for $19.95. Call 1-800-266-5727 or go to:
www.calgold.com/palmsprings/Default.asp?Series=000&Show=500

Greg Van Beek had a unique opportunity to promote Mr. Crosby when he was heard on a radio programme hosted by Marie Osmond. His own article expands on this, but I have to say that Greg loses no chance to give our Bing a well deserved plug! **Howard Crosby** writes on the Crosby Museum website:

> I was interviewed on Monday afternoon, 22nd March, by David Allen of WMVI in Schenectedy, NY for about fifteen minutes. I got a good chance to talk about Bing's influence on 20th century music, and his rightful place in the pantheon of stars...wonder if any of you heard it?

Did UK readers all see the new Sainsbury's TV advert where throughout this commercial Bing was heard singing *Easter Parade* from the *Holiday Inn* soundtrack? Quite clearly not the commercially released recording where Bing, with a heavy cold, sings 'Id your Easder boddet'; also, this TV presentation was just a tad speeded up.

On Monday May 3, as **Greg Van Beek** has reported, Plymouth, Wisconsin radio station 1420 AM WJUB "The Breeze" presented its 2nd annual Bing Crosby birthday celebration as part of the David Hendrickson morning show. From 5am until 8:30am, the station played nothing but Bing Crosby music. Greg Van Beek was an in-studio guest from 6am on. The station, unfortunately, does not offer streaming audio for the web (they do have a website at www.1420thebreeze.com), but there may be a few people from the Plymouth / Sheboygan area of Wisconsin that frequent this site and might like to tune in.

The following week, the Spokane TV station, KSPS, showed the *Bing: Going My Way* documentary they made last year and which, incidentally, is the one screened at the Leeds, UK, meeting last October. This excellent documentary has also received showings on other PBS stations throughout the USA and I know that some of our members are busy lobbying their PBS stations to transmit it if they have not already done so.

Midnight of June 27 was the occasion of long-time broadcaster **Joe Franklin's** final show on WOR, which has been running on TV and then radio since 1964. At 77 Joe says 'I can't work an overnight shift any more', though he will be moving on to a mid-morning nostalgia programme in the autumn. For his very last Midnight Show he played what he has said was his favourite interview - 22 minutes with Bing Crosby, which went out 'live' on TV on December 3, 1976. In forty years Joe never missed a show, none of which was pre-recorded.

Bing's birthday [101 and still very well remembered over the airwaves!] occurred during the run up to this issue and Wig in his column relates the details of a remarkable six hour broadcast of some one hundred tracks over digital radio. This form of transmission and reception is rapidly taking over from analogue broadcasts which affect both wireless and television. The clarity of sound and vision will make it a 'must have' for most viewers and listeners notwithstanding the fact that, anyway, the UK government will effectively close down the old analogue system over which they have control and make museum pieces of our present equipment like it or not. Mind you, they said the same about 78s !

And from **Stephen Lewis** on June 7:

"This evening the local PBS station featured a biography called "The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg," documenting the career of the great Detroit Tigers baseball player who was the first Jew to play major league baseball. Greenberg was traded to the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1947, shortly after Bing bought 25% ownership in the team. In the spring of '47 Bing invited Greenberg to be a guest on his Philco radio show. The show was broadcast May 14 and included a trio of Bing, Hank and Groucho singing "Goodbye Mr. Ball Goodbye." The Greenberg biography featured several excerpts from the radio broadcast and ended with the entire song. Clearly Greenberg was a much better ballplayer than singer."

FILMS ON TELEVISION

As will be seen these are all on USA networks. The UK? Nothing!

JUST FOR YOU	HBO
STAGECOACH	Fox Movie Channel

THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S	AMC
HOLIDAY INN	Turner ClassicMovies
THE COUNTRY GIRL	AMC
THE ROAD TO HONG KONG	Turner Classic Movies [Wide Screen]
HIGH SOCIETY	Turner Classic Movies
JUST FOR YOU	Cinemax

FAREWELL TO FRANK KELLY

Among the Essex group of the ICC none was more dedicated than Frank Kelly, who passed away last April. I'd known Frank for many years and when visiting, he and his wife, Hazel, always made me feel more than welcome. Among his several talents Frank was a cabinet maker and carefully stored in his purpose built furniture was his huge, Bing collection some of which had been sent to him by relatives in America and Australia. Never one to let things pass him by Frank was in his eighties when he decided to acquire a computer, and it wasn't long before he passed his City & Guilds in word processing. All this on top of his pelargonium cultivation, having created his own varieties. His enthusiasm for his music collection never waned though. Even a few weeks before he died he bought a new record player with a 78-rpm turntable. Those who knew him, either from the Leeds meetings or from local get-togethers, will miss his amiable presence in the Crosby circle of friends. Our sympathies go out to Frank's wife, Hazel, and all his family.

Bert Bishop June 2004

(Editor: Thanks, Bert for your usual round-up. It does seem that Bing is being heard and seen less often on radio and TV nowadays so let's all ask our local media contacts to remember the anniversary of Bing's passing in October.)

Bing's Britain

Out of the blue from a Canadian source has come a 30 minute film featuring Bing which we thought we knew nothing about. It's a travelogue produced by the British Tourist Authority and narrated by Bing in which he sings the praises of Britain and encourages people to visit these Isles. The programme also includes clips from Bing's tour of wartime Britain in 1944 and some golf-course banter with Bob Hope from 1952. It was only when looking for something else that I found that BING #45 (March 1977, page 47) had a brief article about the making of this travelogue which was to be shown abroad to tie in with the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

Greg Van Beek had this to say about it:

> "...I was pleasantly surprised at what was on *Bing's Britain*. It appears to me that it was filmed at Gleneagles in Scotland in August of 1976, as I have a different interview Bing filmed at Gleneagles in that same setting, at the same time. He's wearing the same clothes in fact on both. It looks like this wasn't a television program, but rather a tourist film. Something for the traveler's bureau to attract people to visit Britain. I'd venture to say that Bing was totally unscripted as well. I imagine the producer just asked him to talk about Britain's golf, horse racing, cuisine, people, etc. and Bing just took it from there. Amazing that he knew so much about the country. His love for it is certainly apparent."

I agree with Greg that Bing was talking extemporaneously, as only he could. His fluency was amazing. I must start having more holidays in Britain. It looks a great place!

Available from Festival Films for $10 or free when you combine it with the purchase of their latest package for $25. See Trading Post for contact details.

ONCE IN A WHILE

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Ronald Reagan died on June 5 at the age of 93. Many detailed obituaries of him have appeared and it is not necessary for me to go into much detail here. Suffice to say that Mr. Reagan was the much loved 40th President of the United States and that his achievements in office will be remembered for a long time. It is his earlier career as an actor that is relevant to our pages and from 1937 to 1964 he appeared in over 50 films, most notably *Knute Rockne All American* (1940), *King's Row* (1942), *The Hasty Heart* (1949) and *The Killers* (1964). He was President of the Screen Actors Guild from 1947-1952 and 1959-60. Reagan's first wife was actress Jane Wyman (another with many Crosby connections) and they were married from 1940 to 1948 and had two children, Michael and Maureen. Ronald Reagan married Nancy Davis in 1952; their son Ron was a dancer and, latterly, talk-show host, while daughter Patti became a novelist. Reagan's flagging screen career prompted him to seek TV work as early as 1950. In addition to guesting on dozens of anthology shows and series, he was a regular on "The Orchid Award" (1953-54), hosted and occasionally starred in "General Electric Theatre" (1954-61), and hosted "Death Valley Days" (1964-66).

It was on April 16, 1942 that Ronald Reagan (pronounced 'Reegan' by Bing on the show) made his bow on the *Kraft Music Hall*. Bing described him as the star of *King's Row* and said he was about to make *Desperate Journey* before enlisting in the forces. Bing asked Reagan which branch of the forces he was going to join and received the reply that it would probably be the Cavalry. Ronnie then took part in a spoof of a daytime soap opera *Heartbreak Hospice* with Bing and Mary Martin.

Howard Crosby, Bing's nephew, contributed a nice memory to the Bing Crosby Internet Museum just after Mr. Reagan's passing.

> "In September of 1978, I had just started working for Westinghouse and was sent to a corporate training session in Pittsburgh. While having breakfast at 6 a. m. in a downtown hotel coffee shop, by myself, a man was seated at the table next to mine, also by himself. It was Ronald Reagan, then between campaigns and in Pittsburgh to stump for a local congressional candidate.
>
> I went over and introduced myself, said that I was an admirer of his, and said that he may have known my late

uncle. When I told him who that was, he laughed and said of course, and invited me to join him for breakfast. For the next forty minutes he regaled me with stories of the old days in Hollywood, the studio system, etc. He was a big fan and admired Bing very much, had worked with him selling war bonds in the 40's, and told me Bing was the classiest star Hollywood ever produced, except for maybe Jimmy Stewart.

I've voted in every election since 1972, but I've only cast two votes enthusiastically. 1980 and 1984. He was the greatest American of my lifetime. He's in his "shining city" now. God bless you, Mr. President.

Howard Crosby

Hal Shaper, songwriter and music publisher died aged 72 on January 8, 2004. A South African by birth who later made London his home, his first big success was 'Softly, As I Leave You' which was recorded by many top artists including Frank Sinatra. For Streisand he wrote 'Martina', for Petula Clark he turned out 'My Friend The Sea', and there was 'The Years Of My Youth' for Jack Jones and 'The Mysterious People' for Val Doonican. Two of the songs he wrote with Cyril Ornadel for the musical *Great Expectations* were 'Children' and 'At My Time Of Life', both of which were recorded by Bing and also much admired by him. Shaper also wrote more than 80 songs for films, and collaborated with Jerry Goldsmith, Maurice Jarre, Michel Legrand, Ron Goodwin and John Williams. Among his most successful film songs were 'It's a Long Road' from *First Blood* (1982) and 'Free as the Wind', the theme song from *Papillon* (1973), later covered by Andy Williams and Engelbert Humperdinck.

IT'S TOUGH BEING THE SON OF BING

Ken Crossland spotted an old article with this heading in the *Melody Maker* magazine of December 27, 1958 which makes interesting reading.

Pat Boone talks about Gary Crosby

It's tough being born at the top. Take the case of Gary Crosby, eldest son of the fabulous Bing. In a world over-populated with vocalists of all types, Gary chose to become a singer. Comparisons were inevitable—and disparaging.

"What a pity he hasn't inherited, the Crosby pipes," they said. He was measured against Bing in other ways. Whereas Old Man Crosby is famed for being relaxed and easy-going, Gary was assessed as a young man of cocky and aggressive disposition. Fortunately, not everyone took him at face value.

"All that's on the surface," says Pat Boone. "Gary and I get along fine together. Maybe that's because he knows I like him. I think he likes me."

Boone's theory is that the outward Gary Crosby is the defence of a youngster who, in the shadow of his celebrated dad, felt hopelessly inadequate.

"Part of Gary idolises Bing, the other resents him. He wants passionately to be someone in his own right. But being the son of Bing can be a handicap. The Crosby boys have been described as being a little wild. Well, of course, they've cut loose a little. Bing kept the boys on a tight rein—ruled them with a rod of iron, with the best intentions. He just didn't want them to be spoiled. You know, you can often judge a man by his treatment of children. I travelled back to Hollywood with Gary when he was released from the army. He was dead beat.

"On the plane he tried to get some sleep. I had my three children with me and one of my little girls wouldn't leave Gary alone—kept climbing on him and talking. Gary was wonderful, with her. And all that toughness. I watched him when we landed. Gary scanned the faces along the barrier eagerly as we taxied in.

"'None of my family there,' he said. I saw his face darken with disappointment before he covered it up by gagging. Then he spotted his brother Dennis and got excited again. You should have seen his face when he saw that Bing had come down to meet him, too!

"It's the Old Man," he babbled, off his guard. Then the shutters went up and he was the hard-boiled Gary once again.

"It's the Crosby tradition of nonchalance. But underneath, Gary longs to succeed and earn the respect of Bing.

"I think his performance in *Mardi Gras* will do the trick. He plays up all the Crosby mannerisms, strictly with tongue in cheek. He really emerges as a light comedian."

A comical and successful Gary Crosby shouldn't need the pathetic poses of the insecure. Gary will get a chance of living down his adolescent reputation, thanks to *Mardi Gras*. Odd that he only had to laugh himself out of the shadow of Bing.

More Snippets of Bing

Here's Ted Laker with more mentions of Bing seen in hard-to-find books.

You would expect to find Bing's name prominently featured in such publications as the prestigious "The Sunday Times 1000 Makers of the Cinema" although nowadays with modern thinking you can never be too sure how much space the Crosby name will receive. Happily he's well in evidence, a nice film-still complete with lute, as in *Pennies From Heaven*, leads into a few familiar paragraphs summing up his career, closing with the words "Crosby, with Sinatra and Presley, was one of the three great male vocalists of the 20th. century." I would have had him out on his own, myself!!

The great Cecil B. De Mille, one of the founding fathers of Hollywood, collaborated on his life story in 1959. When discussing his tribute to the world of circus in *The Greatest Show On Earth*, he talks about shots of close-ups of the audience, mentioning especially "the delightful bit, in which Bing Crosby and Bob Hope consented to appear with no listing of their names in the cast, or any other warning before our audience in the cinema, suddenly sees them, side by side, solemnly swinging their heads left and right as their eyes follow the swinging of a trapeze."

In "Laugh Makers; A Pictorial History of American Comedians" by William Cahn, published in 1957, there is passing reference to Bing in the galaxy of talent that

passed through the Mack Sennett studios. Mention is made of how the Sennett films were full of knockabout comedy, wide in their appeal, much of it due to the roster of people whose careers were helped in their stay at the Keystone studios. Then follows a lengthy list of names with Bing Crosby sandwiched between W. C. Fields and Ford Sterling (one time leader of the Keystone Kops). Rather more than a snippet, is Sennett's own description of Bing in his 1954 book, "King of Comedy".

Bing came to work. He braced me immediately on a matter that was bothering him.

"What about make-up, Mr. Sennett?"

"Make-up ? What do you mean, Bing?"

"You know—on the face? What do you want me to do about eyes and chin and mouth and stuff like that there?"

I looked him over and laughed.

"Boy, I like you on the hoof, as is. Don't change anything."

"But I took a lot of tests, you know, at most of the big studios, and they all spent hours making me up before they put a camera on me."

"I know," I said. "I know all about that. They covered you with goo—and you didn't get a job. Now we'll just put you out there and let you look like yourself."

To be honest, I wasn't as confident as all that in Bing Crosby. I knew he could sing. But whether he could read a line convincingly and make with a funny were unknown quantities. I decided to take no chances with him as an actor. In his first picture I cast a well-known comedian along with him and gave the comedian all the important dialogue. Aside from singing—and we threw in song cues for him on the slightest pretexts—I saw to it that Crosby barely uttered.

When the first rushes were run off in the screening room, we all discovered instanter something that has made hundreds of millions of people happy ever since: Mr. Crosby, with or without benefit of writer to give him the best lines, was as skillful a comedian as ever stole a scene. He underplayed and made off with every sequence from every comedian we put in his pictures—under the impression we were helping him out. He has been doing it ever since.

Bing sings in the Sennett short One More Chance

The loving tribute to Laurel and Hardy simply entitled "Mr. Laurel and Mr. Hardy" by John McCabe, published 1966, has a few Crosby notes too. Dealing with Oliver Hardy, we learn that Hardy was keen on golf, and was often in one of the Hollywood teams, that included such luminaries as Bing Crosby, Guy Kibbee and Adolph Menjou. Oliver Hardy became very adept at the game, in the mid thirties winning the Motion Picture Golf Tournament. Another page in the same book, bemoans the passing of screen comedy as it used to be, touching on names that had once flourished, and how the form had changed, making space for such as Red Skelton, Abbott & Costello, not forgetting Bing Crosby and Bob Hope.

There is another Crosby related entry from this first class study on the great team of Ollie and Stan. "In 1926, Leo McCarey, who was to attain great fame in films, such as *Going My Way* with Bing Crosby, was a production supervisor and sometimes director for Hal Roach . . . to Leo McCarey was given the job of directing the first official Laurel and Hardy film *Putting Pants On Philip*." Others say that Clyde Bruckman was the director but no doubt McCarey was in there somewhere.

"Of Mice And Magic: A History of American Animated Cartoons" published in 1980, by Leonard Maltin - lists a Popeye cartoon called *It's The Natural Thing To Do*. Popeye and Bluto's constant fights are given a good ribbing in the animated short, built around the song introduced by Bing in *Double Or Nothing*. Also this book contains "For the early sound release, *The King Of Jazz,* pioneer animator Walter Lantz was called in to work up an introductory sequence, showing how Paul Whiteman was crowned "King of Jazz." The bandleader caricatured and portrayed as a big game hunter - his singing voice provided by one of the Rhythm Boys trio named Bing Crosby."

Garson Kanin, writer and film director, in his book "Together Again! : The Stories of the Great Hollywood Teams" under the heading The Nonchalants (Bob Hope and Bing Crosby) several pages are devoted to Crosby and Hope in solo careers, and their eventual teaming. Some of Mr. Kanin's facts are a bit suspect, but to have

all these pages plus a full gallery of film stills is quite something. I won't go into great detail on the entries, but worth quoting is TIME magazine "The Road shows were rummage sales of stuff out of vaudeville, burlesque - marvellously shoddy masterpieces of farce and fantasy, stitched together with clichés and ad libs. The series proved if nothing else, that Crosby was nearly as deft and daft a comedian as Hope." Kanin concludes "Two Classy Entertainers - merged into the classiest of teams." Certainly a worthy volume, published in 1981 - other double acts featured are Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland, Astaire and Rogers, Laurel and Hardy . . . I'd better not continue as there's almost a roll call of Hollywood's finest in the golden years.

The artist Norman Rockwell, famed for his accurate paintings recalling small town America, and his many years as cover artist for the Saturday Evening Post, was contracted to do the introductory character studies featured in the misguided remake of *Stagecoach* in 1966. The Readers Digest sponsored Norman Rockwell's America, published 1975, contains the full page colour depiction of Bing as Doc Boone, his part being one of the few saving graces of the later *Stagecoach* film. The illustration in the masterly Rockwell manner, comes in the section called "An American Portrait Gallery." Crosby is in the distinguished company of John Wayne, Walter Brennan and Gary Cooper. With all the paintings reproduced plus interesting informative text, the book is of value, in its whole as lasting entertainment.

My enthusiasm appears to be running away with me, so perhaps this is the best place to call a halt, saving any other pieces that I have in mind, for a possible further article.

Ted Laker

Keeping Track

Ken Crossland looks at what's new.

Okay everyone, cheque books and credit cards at the ready because here we go with another shopping basket full of goodies. And quite a mixed bag it is too.

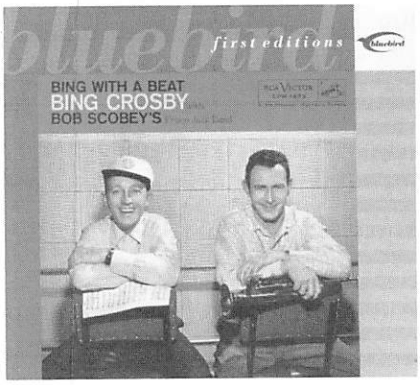
COMPACT DISCS

I imagine that all of us get from time to time to nominate our favourite Bing album. It's almost an impossible task, but for me, the album that always takes some beating is "Bing With A Beat", Bing's 1957 collaboration with trumpeter Bob Scobey. It's been around on CD before, but only through a very expensive import route from Japan. So, how nice to have it back on mainstream release, courtesy of the Bluebird Jazz label - and seemingly, with a hidden bonus!

Bing With A Beat **Bluebird RCA BLU601422C** **USA/UK** **$15/£10**

1. Let A Smile Be Your Umbrella 2. I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter 3. Along The Way To Waikiki 4. Exactly Like You 5. Dream A Little Dream Of Me 6. Last Night On The Back Porch 7. Some Sunny Day 8. Whispering 9. Tell Me 10. Mack The Knife 11. Down Among The Sheltering Palms 12. Mama Loves Papa

Only 12 tracks sadly, with no-one stumbling across a locked chest of unreleased masters from the same session, but member Jon Oye's sharp ears tell us that there is <u>something</u> new. Here's what Jon had to say:



"Has anyone noticed that track #4, "Exactly Like You" is an alternate take? The brass and piano instrumental break is noticeably different from the American LP/Japanese CD release. But the dead giveaway is in Bing's "scat" verses which immediately follow the break. Rather than singing the "Doo-dupe" we're used to hearing, he instead first pauses, then sings a drawn out "hey" - then proceeds to sing it so that it sounds more like, "daaay-hey", followed by the familiar "de-hoodle-de-(etc.)", then repeats it that way until the next line. It's hard to write it down in a comprehensible way, but those of you who already have the new CD, give it a listen. Then a rare Bing "fluff" occurs, on the line "I want to hand the world to you" - he haltingly sings the word "hand", so that it comes out sounding like "h-hand"."

Jon is absolutely right — it is an alternate take! In one way, some alternates from Bing's late 50s and 60s recordings are long overdue. Many record companies have found things in their vaults from the same period and most of the CD re-releases feature some alternate material or studio chatter, but this is probably the first time we have come across one with Bing. Sleeve notes by Will Friedwald by the way and 24-bit remastering, which, as with Bluebird's recent Sinatra release "Young Blue Eyes", gives great results.

Swingin' With Bing - The Lost Radio Performances **Shout! Factory D3K 31507** **USA** **$49.98**

DISC ONE: ***BING MEETS NAT KING COLE & THE ANDREWS SISTERS***

With Jud Conlon's Rhythmaires and John Scott Trotter & His Orchestra

1. Swinging On A Star 2. Don't Fence Me In (with The Andrews Sisters) 3. Bing introduces "Strange Music" 4. Strange Music

5.Tallahassee 6. Peg O' My Heart 7. Shoo Shoo Baby 8. Bing chats with The Andrews Sisters 9. You Don't Have To Know The Language (with The Andrews Sisters) 10. South America, Take It Away (with The Andrews Sisters) 11. It's Magic 12. The Night Has A Thousand Eyes 13. But Beautiful (with Uan Rasey [trumpet]) 14. Bing introduces Nat King Cole 15. Bing chats with Nat 16. Sam's Song (with Nat King Cole) 17. My Foolish Heart 18. Them There Eyes 19. Too Late Now 20. Not Mine 21. Bing welcomes back The Andrews Sisters 22. I Can Dream, Can't I? (with The Andrews Sisters, Patty Andrews, featured soloist) 23. Sure Thing (with Buddy Cole - piano) 24. Bing introduces finale 25. May The Good Lord Bless And Keep You (with Nat King Cole & The Andrews Sisters)

DISC TWO:

BING MEETS ELLA FITZGERALD & LOUIS ARMSTRONG

(Their Complete Radio Duets - Part 1)

Featuring: Dinah Shore, Jack Teagarden and Red Nichols With Jud Conlon's Rhythmaires and John Scott Trotter & His Orchestra

1. Basin Street Blues (with Ella Fitzgerald and Red Nichols, cornet) 2. If This Isn't Love 3. It's A Good Day 4. Bing introduces Louis Armstrong 5. Bing chats with Louis 6.Blueberry Hill (Version 1) (with Louis Armstrong) 7.A Fella With An Umbrella 8. Bing introduces Ella and "Dreamer's Holiday" 9. A Dreamer's Holiday (with Ella Fitzgerald) 10. For You, For Me, Forever More 11. Bing & Louis introduce "Gone Fishin'" 12. Gone Fishin' (Version 1) (with Louis Armstrong) 13. Lazy Bones (Version 1) (with Louis Armstrong) 14. The Best Things In Life Are Free 15. That's A-Plenty (with Ella Fitzgerald) 16. A Kiss To Build A Dream On (Version 1) 17.Louis congratulates Bing on his 20th anniversary 18.Blueberry Hill (Version 2) (with Louis Armstrong) 19. Bing chats with Jack Teagarden 20. Rockin' Chair (Part 1) (with Jack Teagarden & Louis Armstrong) 21. Bing chats with Dinah Shore 22. Rockin' Chair (Part 2) (with Dinah Shore, Louis Armstrong & Jack Teagarden) 23. Five Minutes More 24. A Marshmallow World (with Ella Fitzgerald) 25.Silver Bells (Version 1) (with Ella Fitzgerald) 26. Bing introduces "Memphis Blues" 27. Memphis Blues (Version 1) (with Ella Fitzgerald)

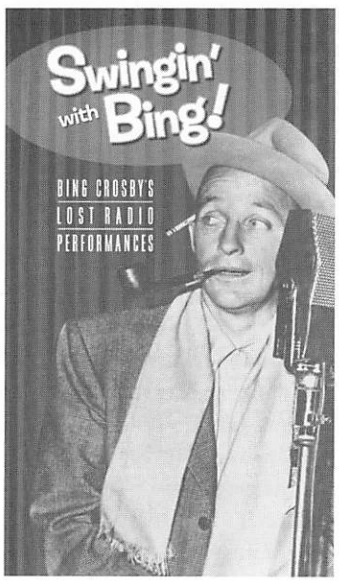
DISC THREE:

BING MEETS ELLA FITZGERALD & LOUIS ARMSTRONG

(Their Complete Radio Duets - Part 2)

Featuring: Red Nichols, Joe Venuti, Jack Teagarden, Les Paul, Ziggy Elman, Toni Arden and The Mills Brothers With Jud Conlon's Rhythmaires and John Scott Trotter & His Orchestra.

1. Stay With The Happy People (with Ella Fitzgerald) 2. It Had To Be You (with Red Nichols - cornet) 3. Chattanoogie Shoe Shine Boy (with Joe Venuti - violin) 4. Now That I Need You 5. Gone Fishin' (Version 2) (with Louis Armstrong & Jack Teagarden) 6. Chicago Style (with Ella Fitzgerald) 7. Route 66 8. Blue Skies (with Les Paul - guitar) 9. Istanbul (with Ella Fitzgerald and Ziggy Elman - trumpet) 10. Lazy Bones (Version 2) (with Louis Armstrong) 11. Bing introduces Toni Arden & the band 12. My Honey's Lovin' Arms (with Toni Arden, Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden & Joe Venuti) 13. Bing introduces The Mills Brothers 14. Up A Lazy River/Paper Doll (with The Mills Brothers) 15. Way Back Home (with Ella Fitzgerald & The Mills Brothers) 16. You're Just In Love (with Louis Armstrong)17. Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer (with Ella Fitzgerald) 18. Silver Bells (Version 2) (with Ella Fitzgerald) 19. Bing chats with Ella 20. White Christmas (with Ella Fitzgerald) 21. A Kiss To Build A Dream On (Version 2) (with Louis Armstrong) 22. Bing, Ella & Louis introduce "Memphis Blues" 23. Memphis Blues (Version 2) (with Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong)



Once again, the Crosby world owes a debt of thanks to Ken Barnes for this monumental set, which is due for release in the USA on 24 August. Shout! Factory (what a name!) in their press release tells us that the set contains 57 "never-before-released live performances". Well, with a dramatic title such as "The Lost Radio Performances", I guess they would feel obliged to say that. The fact of the matter is that much of this material has been available before on the Parrot CDs of a few years ago and the "Havin' Fun With Bing & Louis" releases. But there is some new and unusual stuff here and if the finished product is anything like the test pressings I heard some time back, both sound quality and presentation will be excellent with the tracks edited and linked together in a very seamless way. One not to be missed.

It's not often that we can claim direct credit for inspiring a CD release but this next item falls squarely into that category.

Two Of A Kind: Bing Crosby & Bob Hope **Universal B-0002379** **USA** **$7.00**

1. Pennies From Heaven 2. I'll Be Seeing You 3. Red Sails In The Sunset 4. Too Marvelous For Words 5. Young At Heart 6. Thanks For The Memory (Bob Hope and Shirley Ross) 7. The Lady's In Love With You (Bob Hope and Shirley Ross) 8. Two Sleepy People (Bob Hope and Shirley Ross) 9. Penthouse Serenade (When We're Alone) (Bob Hope and Shirley Ross) 10. Put It There Pal (Bing & Bob Hope)

As Wig Wiggins has already told us, this release came about because of the cover photo of BING #134 catching the eye of Bob Zipkin at Universal Music. Bob contacted Wig about a CD release to utilize the cover, and Wig in turn enlisted the help of Greg Van Beek to obtain the original photo. Universal then "doctored" the picture slightly to make it suitable for an album cover. Only 10 tracks, of which 6 feature Bing, but they are slightly less common and all in all, a nice budget release. But oh what a shame that Bob and Bing never recorded "Two Of A Kind", the song that Johnny Mercer penned for his 1960 collaboration

with Bobby Darin.

Bing Crosby - 50 Original Recordings **PLAT BX2243** **UK** **£7.99**
CD1 1. Dear Hearts and Gentle People 2. Play a Simple Melody (with Gary Crosby) 3. Gone Fishin' (with Louis Armstrong) 4. Far Away Places 5. I Can't Begin to Tell You 6. Sam's Song (with Gary Crosby) 7. Have I Told You Lately That I Love You? (with the Andrews Sisters) 8. In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening (with Jane Wyman) 9. Mule Train 10. Sioux City Sue 11. Ghost Riders in the Sky 12. If I Loved You 13. Night and Day 14. A Fella With an Umbrella 15. Day by Day 16. Yah-Ta-Ta, Yah-Ta-Ta (with Judy Garland) 17. Sparrow in the Tree Top (with the Andrews Sisters) 18. The Day After Forever 19. The Bells of St. Mary's 20. Put It There Pal (with Bob Hope) 21. Evelina 22. Going My Way 23. You Belong to My Heart 24. Galway Bay 25. Now Is the Hour
CD2
1. Swinging on a Star 2. Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters) 3. You Are My Sunshine 4. Deep in the Heart of Texas 5. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral 6. It's Been a Long, Long Time 7. South America, Take It Away (with the Andrews Sisters) 8. Sunday, Monday or Always 9. Road to Morocco (with Bob Hope) 10. Please 11. Pistol Packin' Mama (with the Andrews Sisters) 12. I'll Be Seeing You 13. MacNamara's Band 14. Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson) 15. The Whiffenpoof Song 16. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (with the Andrews Sisters) 17. Moonlight Becomes You 18. San Fernando Valley 19. Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams 20. An Apple for the Teacher (with Connie Boswell) 21. I'm an Old Cowhand 22. Pennies from Heaven 23. Walking the Floor Over You 24. White Christmas 25. Where the Blue of the Night
Yet another of these very reasonably priced compilations. This one is issued by Prism Direct, 1 Dundee Way, Enfield, Middlesex EN3 7SX, UK (Phone: 0870 747 2510, e-mail: enquiries@prismdirect.co.uk, web site: http://prismdirect.co.uk/index.html). I haven't heard it but I see that it contains a few tracks which are not often seen on CD such as "A Fella With An Umbrella", and "Evelina". The CDs can be purchased separately for £3.99 each. CD1 is titled Bing Crosby - Going My Way - 25 Great Favourites (PLATCD988) and CD2 is titled Bing Crosby - The Million Sellers (PLATCD 295).

Triple Treasures **Digimode Entertainment Ltd** **UK** **£8**
This triple CD appears to have been around since 2002, and is originally of Dutch origin, but member Stan Hellens came across one in Kent recently. Stan paid £8 and says the quality is good. CD1 is called Alexander's Ragtime Band, CD2 is Pennies From Heaven and CD3 is Swingin' On A Star. 70 tracks, but all largely familiar and most people will have most of them.

Lots more that probably fall into the category of "fillers", and in the interest of space, I'll deal with these rather more cursorily.

The Story Of My Life - The Michael Holliday Anthology
EMI 7243 59748429 **UK** **£17.99**
Yours truly had a hand in producing this set to accompany my biography of "Britain's Bing Crosby". Two directly-linked Crosby elements to this 3-disc set are the inclusion of the full album "To Bing - From Mike" that Holliday recorded in 1962, together with Bing's recorded tribute to Mike for the memorial concert that was held in April 1964. Although Bing's message appeared on the LP of the concert, it was taken from a theatre recording with Bing's voice booming through the theatre loudspeakers. The version included here is from Bing's original message disc that he sent to the concert organizers. And if you like Mike, 85 tracks here, 69 of which are new to CD.

Let Me Sing And I'm Happy - Al Jolson **Living Era AJS272** **UK** **£8.99**
58 Jolson recordings from 1945-50 on this double CD, including the two commercial duets with Bing ('Alexander's Ragtime Band' and 'The Spaniard Who Blighted My Life'). All the tracks are commercial recordings, although that said, some have their origins from Jolson's tenure in the *Kraft Music Hall* in the late Forties.

Let Me Sing And I'm Happy - Al Jolson **Prism PLATCD 708** **USA/UK** **$5.49/** **£3.29**
Waiting For The Robert E. Lee - Ma Blushin' Rosie - Baby Face - Bye Bye Baby - My Blue Heaven - Whispering - The Best Things In Life - Lullaby Of Broadway - Easter Parade - The One I Love
Don't get confused with this similar CD on the Prism label (indeed, with the same title) which was released in 2002 and has 39 Jolson radio tracks, including 9 duets with Bing from Philco shows as shown.

Linger Awhile - Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra **Living Era AJS 283** **UK** **£8.99**
Changes - Louisiana - You Took Advantage Of Me - Makin' Whoopee - Happy Feet
Another double release from Living Era, featuring 41 Whiteman tracks. Only a handful of Crosby vocals as listed above, all of which we have had on the Chronologicals but lots of examples of what Russell Davies at the BBC recently called "the kind of vocals that Bing Crosby was put on this planet to abolish."

Alistair Cooke Remembered **BBC Radio Collection** **UK** **£13.99**
To mark the passing of Alistair Cooke, the BBC have issued two CDs of his "Letter From America", the second volume of which includes his Christmas letter from December 1977 where he paid tribute to Bing and Groucho Marx. It was interesting that this letter was one of three from Cooke's 50-odd year career that the BBC chose to stream on their web site the week after his death. A very perceptive summing up of Bing, in my view and well worth having.
Finally, keep an eye out for the following which should be on the market around the time the magazine reaches you.

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volumes 36 & 37 should be available towards the end of August, notwithstanding the sad passing of John R T Davies, the doyen of sound restorers, who made such a contribution to this series early on.

My Life With Bing / My Last Years From Bing are the two books penned by Kathryn about her marriage to Bing. Greg Van Beek tells us that Kathryn has now recorded both as audio books, each one consisting of 12 CDs. Further details follow from Greg.

A full review of these will appear in the next issue.

DVD

Just For You / Here Comes The Groom **Universal Music** **USA** **$14.95**

A nice pairing of two of Bing's Fifties musicals from Universal, and nice too to see that they are prepared to mix black & white and colour on a two-on-one disc. Due for release in the US on 29 June so should be readily available by the time you read this. UK members will need a DVD capable of playing Region 1 DVDs.

News of two separate DVD releases both from Paramount Home Video and retailed at around $14 in the USA. Both available in August.

Riding High **Paramount Home Video** **USA** **$14.95**

Only a single movie on this DVD from Paramount, and slightly more expensive too, but welcome nonetheless. Bing starred with Coleen Gray in this equestrian tale from 1949.

The Country Girl **Paramount Home Video** **USA** **$14.95**

Bing in one of his finest roles as an alcoholic singer trying to make a comeback with the help of his director (William Holden). Grace Kelly won an Oscar for her performance as the wife who may be driving her husband to drink.

All three of the above releases are available from Festival Films at 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA. They also have the following new release on offer.

Bing's Britain

This recently discovered Travelog/Tourist Bureau film was shot at Gleneagles in Scotland in August of 1976. Bing talks without a script about his great love for Britain. 25 min., color. **DVD-R or VHS:** $10 or free with a specific $25 purchase from Festival Films.

This is a remarkable piece of film, with Bing talking as only he could about his love of Britain.

And finally a couple more fillers.

There'll Always Be An England - All The Greatest Songs From The War Years **UK** **£9.99**

This is another one that slipped through our net when it was originally released in 2002. Sounds like a CD rather than a DVD, but member Trevor Wagstaff tells us that it includes the rather rare footage of Bing performing "San Fernando Valley" from the Stage Door Canteen in London in 1944. Available over the web from Amazon.

Rosemary Clooney - Singing At Her Best **Koch Vision Entertainment** **USA $15.99**

40 minutes worth of Rosie on TV, including a western medley with Bing from a guest spot she did on one of Bing's specials in 1964. I've had others in this series by Dean Martin and Perry Como and been well pleased with them but if other reviews are anything to go by, this set isn't great. Indeed Amazon.com's promotional review of the DVD makes entertaining reading - and perhaps explains why there were 45 "new or used" copies going cheap!

WHAT'S ON THE WEB?

*As ever, lots of stuff buzzing around the internet, but for me the most interesting item was **Bing Crosby's Levi's Tuxedo** that sold for $1,580 on eBay. Here's how the seller described it.*

"In 1951 famous actor/singer Bing Crosby tried to check in at a Vancouver, British Columbia hotel. He was in hunting clothes and sported an unkempt appearance - Crosby was on the tail end of a hunting trip. The clerk pursed his lips, lifted his nose into the air and slowly scanned down the man and decided one of the most well known entertainers in the world was a common bum. He would not allow Bing to register as a guest. Bing told the clerk, "I'm sorry I didn't bring my blue serge suit. I haven't worn it since high school and it probably wouldn't fit anyway."

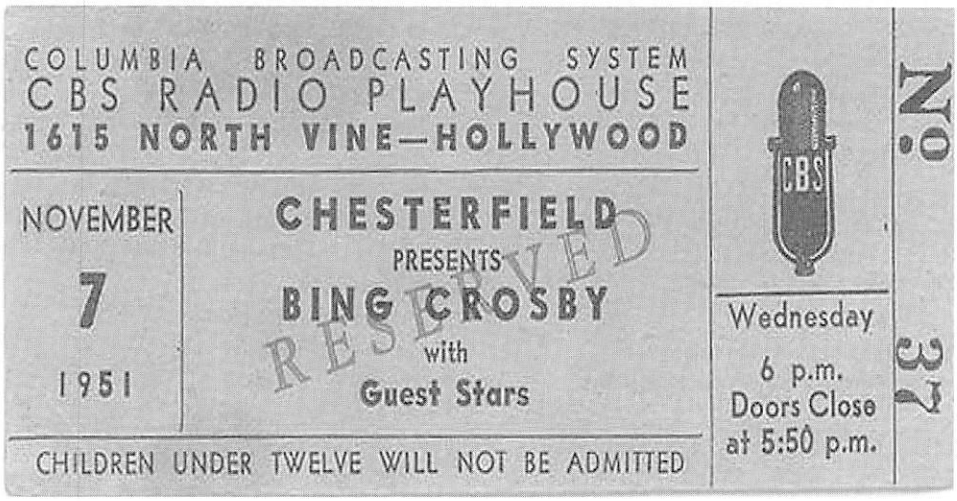
Bob Hope, a close friend who made several popular movies with Crosby, later gave the hotel clerk a small part in one of his movies because "he knew how to recognize a bum."

Back in Elko, Silver State Stampede members saw a way to get some great publicity for the big rodeo and for Elko. After all, Crosby had been Honorary Mayor of Elko since 1948. Besides, he was a local rancher up at North Fork when he wasn't busy back in Hollywood. Levi Strauss Company in San Francisco was asked

by the Stampede committee to make two Levi tuxedos - one for Crosby, the other for Elko Mayor Dave Dotta. Plans called for Elko to celebrate "Blue Serge Day" on June 30, 1951 during the Silver State Stampede. They were beauties. The double breasted tuxedos were, of course, traditional dark blue denim. Lapels were light blue and each jacket had a red boutonniere made of Levi's red tags. Inside the coats were leather labels signed by the president of the American Hotel Association, D.J. O'Brien, that ansured the mayor and Bing of lodging registration anywhere in nation. Crosby shrugged into his tuxedo, buttoned it, and declared, " Hell's fire, ain't that a wizard!"

Interesting! As though of you who frequent the Bing Crosby Internet Museum will know, Judy Schmid attempted to organise some pledges to buy it for the Gonzaga Museum, but without success.

Space precludes much else ... a Crosby Clambake shirt from 1947 could have been yours for $89... a rather nice fund raising ad from 1948 went for around $10 ...and you could also own a ticket for the recording of one of Bing's Chesterfield shows from 1951.



Finally, you may recall my extolling the virtues of Apple's iPODs last time. Well the new mini version of this has been so popular that Apple has struggled to keep up with demand, postponing the UK launch by some months. I got mine via an importer and at the time of writing have 1071 songs loaded, with 25% space still left!. You do need to be a creature of the CD and PC age to make these work, so if you are still winding up the gramophone, it's not for you. But for me, Bing anywhere, anytime, great quality and all on something the size of a credit card! I couldn't resist.

Ken Crossland

New Releases From Our Honorary President!

Kathryn Crosby has just completed an ambitious recording project, which rivals any of the narrative works accomplished by Bing in sheer scope and volume. For the Crosbys' many fans, she has committed to compact disc her last two tomes, *My Life With Bing* (1983) and *My Last Years With Bing* (2002) in the form of audio books. We are proud to announce the release of these not-to-be-missed volumes of Crosbyana to add to your collections.

In this busy world we live in, audio books offer a convenient way to "read" books as you do other tasks. They're great to take along in the car during your commutes, while out for a walk, or even in the office or workplace. *My Life With Bing*, as with the actual book, covers the years 1953-1965 on twelve compact discs. *My Last Years With Bing* covers the years 1966-1977 on twelve CD's.

What makes these books so special, in addition to hearing the stories told with the warm and mellifluous voice of Mrs. Crosby, are the many song excerpts by Bing included to illustrate certain chapters and stories. As an example, when reading the comments by Bob Hope from *My Last Years With Bing* on disc one, Bob and Bing can be heard performing 'Put It There, Pal'. At the start of disc eleven, beginning the year 1976, Bing's voice is the first thing you hear, via his recording of 'At My Time of Life'. There are many more songs too, heard throughout each book. Everything from 'Maria Bonita' to 'I Left My Heart In San Francisco'.

Each book sold separately costs $39.95 + $6.95 shipping and handling (within the USA only). If you purchase both books together, the cost is $69.95 + $6.95 s/h, for a saving of $10.00!

For members in the UK, shipping and handling for one book is $9.00 and $13.00 for two books. Payment must be in US dollars via an international money order.

Send your checks or money orders (made out to Greatapes) to:

Greatapes / Media Express
1523 Nicollet Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55403
Phone: 612-872-8284
Fax: 612-872-0635

Greg Van Beek

Ken Gray's List of Songs Not On CD

At Hofstra in 2002, Ken Gray gave your Editor a list of Bing's songs up to 1955 which had not yet appeared on CD and this has been diligently updated each time a new CD has come out. It doesn't seem too long ago that we were listing songs that had not been issued on LP and it's pleasing now to see how little remains to emerge on CD. We owe a huge debt to John McNicholas and his Jonzo CDs for this of course. In the hope that it might be of interest to our readers to see what is still to come, here's the list.

1944
Iowa
Sleigh Ride in July
Just a Prayer Away
Dear Friend

1945
All of My Life
Why Do I Like You?
Early American (L 3749)
If I Loved You (L 3801)
I Love You Truly (L 3803)
Just A-Wearyin' For You (L 3804)
Home Sweet Home
In the Land of Beginning Again
Mighty Like a Rose
I'll Be Yours
We'll Gather Lilacs
You Sang My Love Song To Somebody Else
All Through the Day
I've Told Every Little Star

1946
Just My Luck
You May Not Love Me
When You Make Love to Me
So Much In Love
My Heart Goes Crazy
That's How Much I Love You
Rose of Santa Rosa

1947
Happy Birthday/Auld Lang Syne
I Do, Do, Do Like You
Kokomo, Indiana
The Old Chaperone
Kentucky Babe
Suspense
Pass That Peace Pipe
Experience
Ain't Doin' Bad Doin' Nothin'
Ida, I Do
Swinging Down the Lane
Laroo, Laroo, Lilli Bolero
The Story of Sorrento
Love Me or Leave Me
Oh, You Crazy Moon (L 4729) (unissued)
Easy to Love
Imagination
I'd Love to Live in Loveland
Once and For Always (solo) (L 4745)
Ichabod
Haunted Heart
A Bluebird Singing in My Heart
Love Thy Neighbor (L 4798)

1948
Tarra-Ta-Lara-Ta-Lar

1949
So In Love
Sure Thing
You're Wonderful
The Meadows of Heaven
Make Believe
The Iowa Indian Song
Someplace on Anywhere Road
Sorry
Stay Well
The Little Grey House
This Could Be Forever
My Own Bit of Land
When the Sun Goes Down
The Yodel Blues
The Big Movie Show in the Sky

1950
Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo
So Tall A Tree
Accidents Will Happen (duet)
Milady
And You'll Be Home
Once More the Blue and White
Wouldn't It Be Funny?
The Friendly Islands
Early American (L 5702)
This Is the Time
The Best Thing For You
A Perfect Day

1951
You Gotta Show Me
Silver Moon
Copacabana
Maria Bonita
More I Cannot Wish You
Let Me Look At You
With This Ring I Thee Wed
We All Have a Song in Our Hearts
Old Soldiers Never Die
Bonne Nuit
Your Own Little House

1952
Don't Ever Be Afraid to Go Home
On the 10:10 From Ten-Ten-Tennessee
Fatherly Advice
I Love My Baby
Mother Darlin'

1953
Ohio
Cela M'est Egal
A Propos de Rien
Mademoiselle de Paris (W 84774) (French)
Au Bord de L'eau (French)
Embrasse-Moi Bien (W 84776) (French)
Tu Ne Peux Pas Te Figurer (French)
La Seine (French)
Mon Coeur Est un Violon (W 84780) (French)
La Vie En Rose (W 84781) (French)
Embrasse-Moi Bien (W 84782) (English)
What a Little Moonlight Can Do
If There's Anybody Here
Back in the Old Routine
Cornbelt Symphony
The Call of the South
My Love, My Love

1954
Liebchen
The River
Liza
The Song From "Desiree" (We Meet Again)
Blessing Of St.Francis (Narration)
The Land Around Us
It's Mine, It's Yours
The Search Is Through

1955
Jim, Johnny and Jonas
Farewell
Angel Bells
Let's Harmonize
The Next Time It Happens

Our thanks to Ken Gray and we look forward to some of the gaps being filled.

Bing Crosby
Hollywood

October 29, 1960

Mr. Gord Atkinson
1159 Adirondack Drive
Ottawa 3, Ontario, Canada

Dear Gord:

A little late making reply to your letter of August 12th, I know. It's been on my desk ever since my departure for Europe, and I've only gotten back a day or two now and catching up on my letter writing.

I'm glad that you enjoyed meeting the boys, and that they were a success there in Ottawa. Since then, they've had several very successful engagements, doing good business, to good audiences, and to good critical reaction in Hollywood, Reno, Dayton, Buffalo and some other towns.

They're now in New York, I believe, getting ready to do a Como show. They have a few dates after that, but will be home for a month or so around Christmas and then take off again up through the Northwest.

They have an album coming out which sounds pretty good to me. I hope it meets with some success when it's released.

Thank you for sending me the tape of your interview. It sounded great. Also the copies of the OTTAWA CITIZEN column, which proved very interesting.

I hope that you and your family are in good health and spirits. As ever -

Your friend,

BC:lm

Bing Crosby

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